

Easy Money

Make the most of low interest

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EVERY WEEKDAY

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Cynical ceasefire 'just a ploy'

Nato rejects deal as exiles top a million

BY MICHAEL EVANS, TOM WALKER IN BELGRADE AND CHARLES BREMNER

AN OFFER from Belgrade to begin a unilateral ceasefire in Kosovo from 7pm last night was rejected out of hand by Nato government leaders, who claimed it was simply a ploy to stop the airstrikes.

The sudden announcement of a ceasefire came after a day in which Nato aircraft carried out the largest number of bombing sorties so far in the air campaign. The alliance also warned that the next attacks would be even bigger, piling the pressure on President Milosevic.

The ceasefire announcement was made in a joint statement from the Federal Yugoslav and Serbian governments. It said the 400,000 ethnic Albanian refugees in neighbouring countries would be allowed home.

A Ministry of Defence official said that 1.1 million out of a total ethnic Albanian population of 1.8 million had now become refugees since the civil war in Kosovo began about a year ago.

Vuk Draskovic, the Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister, was quoted as saying that troop levels in Kosovo would be reduced and all forces would return to their barracks before the ceasefire started. He also said Belgrade would allow some form of international involvement in enforcing a peace settlement but there was no commitment to having foreign troops in the province.

Downing Street said that Mr Draskovic, who went on Yugoslav state television to discuss the ceasefire, had "zero authority".

The Belgrade statement also offered a "temporary agreement" with Ibrahim Rugova, the moderate ethnic Albanian leader who has been under Yugoslav military "protection" since the bombing began. The temporary arrangement would be the basis for a "final agreement" on Kosovo, the statement said.

A Downing Street spokesman said: "It doesn't go nearly far enough. Milosevic knows what he has to do and this falls way short of that. Until Milosevic fulfils the conditions Nato



Bussed from Blace's makeshift camp on the Macedonian border to Skopje airport, confused Kosovans are frisked for guns, then pushed aboard charter flights bound for Turkey

Families are divided and deported

NO ONE would tell seven-year-old Ardina Berisha why she was being forced out of a country at gunpoint for the second time in a week. She kept asking where they were going as an armed policeman shoved her into an airport bus, deporting the Berishas and 1,500 other confused refugees to Turkey yesterday.

Rabia, her mother, began to cry and asked a security guard how her husband was meant to find them as he was stranded somewhere in Kosovo. The guard, his face partially covered by a surgical mask, shouted at her to do as she was told.

The Macedonian Government calls this a humanitarian airlift. But United Nations officials threatened to withdraw its funding unless the forced expulsions were stopped and the Government ceased to split families. UN chiefs insisted that officials must register all those leaving Macedonia and the Red Cross condemned the flights because people had no idea they were going.

By last night more than 3,500 refugees had been expelled. They were given no choice about going and there was no attempt to record the names of those forced on to planes at Skopje airport.



Daniel McGrory watches as refugees are forced to fly out to uncertain future

Photograph: Simon Walker

Just before riot police unloaded this bewildered human cargo driven straight from the squalor of the frontier crossing at Blace yesterday, an airport official said: "Don't tell them where they are going or they will try to make a run for it."

Tired and covered in mud, Rabia Berisha clutched the youngest of her five children, 11-month-old Alma, as Macedonian officials pushed and prodded her family towards the first of 14 chartered planes on the tarmac. No one asked to see any family documents — just as well as the Serbs took them seven days ago when forcing the Berishas from their Pristina hiding place.

Nobody had bothered to register their names when they were pulled out of a muddy border field yesterday morning — so this family never officially existed in Macedonia despite having been stranded here for ten days. Her hand-capped son Durim, five, was cradled in the arms of her

nephew, Fatum, 18, who has also been separated from his father. "Will you tell him where I'm going," he pleaded with the security guard frisking him.

Told by The Times that he was to be flown to Turkey, Fatum looked panic-stricken. "Tell them I want to stay here, as close to Kosovo as possible, to wait for my family," he shouted. Like others who tried to protest, he was ignored.

He begged to be allowed to leave his name with an official, asking for it to be passed to the Red Cross. There were no Red Cross or UN officials at the airport although they had been told this deportation was under way.

One man shouted: "At least the Nazis kept a record of those they took away. Who will know if I'm alive or dead. The Serbs have destroyed my records and now the Macedonians pretend I don't exist. A punch in the back silenced further protests.

Asked why the refugees were being searched, a security guard said: "We are looking for guns." Isak Zigoli held up his arms so he could be frisked. He is 72. "I would have stayed in Kosovo and died there if I had known what would happen to me," he said as the guard grabbed the neck of his jumper to stop him talking to reporters. "I don't think I will see my sons again."

Behind came another elderly couple who clung to each other, whispering reassurances, as they were swallowed up in the overcrowded bus.

A succession of aid flights dropped into Skopje and Nato troops bustled around helping to unload tents from Switzerland, ration packs from Germany and water pipes from France. It all piled up on the tarmac with customs officials in no hurry to release it. The Israelis arrived with a field hospital and about 70 troops, who watched uncomfortably as Kosovan refugees were marched past them.

After meeting UN officials, Ljubco Georgievski, the Macedonian Prime Minister, insisted that the refugees had been told that they were being flown to Turkey.

Asked if he would continue with the deportations, he said angrily: "Why are you concentrating on such peripheral issues? This is unimportant. Macedonia is the only innocent victim in this war. Next question."

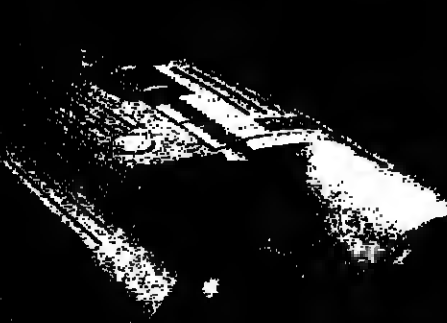
'At least the Nazis kept a record of those they took away. Who will know if I am alive or dead?'

— a refugee leaving for Turkey yesterday

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Royal wedding is not so Posh

BY ALAN HAMILTON AND MICHAEL HARVEY

PALACE officials may hope that the June wedding of Edward and Sophie will be the social event of the year, but they are in danger of being thoroughly upstaged by Posh and Beckham.

The Queen's youngest son weds his beloved Sophie Rhys-Jones at St George's Chapel, Windsor, on June 19. David Beckham of Manchester United marries Victoria Adams, the artist also known as Posh Spice, on July 4, probably in Ireland. Of the two, the latter is raising media blood pressure more than the former.

It emerged yesterday that even Prince Edward's wish to have his ceremony filmed by his own television company,



vetted by Buckingham Palace. At the same time OK! magazine has done a £1 million deal to secure exclusive access to the ceremony uniting footballer and singer.

Martin Townsend, Editor of OK!, believes his million is money well spent. "It is going to be absolutely brilliant," he says.

royal wedding is of course always important, but Edward and Sophie have played it down so much that people simply aren't as interested as they are in Posh Spice and Beckham.

Prince Edward, 34, has expressed a wish that his wedding should be much lower-key than those of his brothers, with 500 guests, and a few members of the public looking on from the Windsor Castle precincts. Beckham, 24, and Adams, 23, will have an expected 500 guests, but they are showing no inhibitions about keeping it quiet.

Fashion designers will be scouring every detail of the two bridal dresses, but the greater interest will be in that of Posh. Sandy Boler, editor of Brides magazine, said: "Posh

and the glitz. Her dress will be more important in terms of fashion, and will be much more of the moment. In a way, she is the bride of the Millennium — a modern bride with a son marrying in a hugely romantic wedding."

Both couples will have their own coats of arms adorning their respective wedding invitations. Prince Edward's are deeply traditional. Beckham and Adams have come up with a design involving a swan, a crown and the motto: "Love, Friendship."

William Hunt, Portcullis Pursuivant at the College of Arms, struck a blow for old-fashioned tradition when he was shown the new crest: "The swan is facing the wrong way, and that is very bad as it is basically showing its bottom

Lockerbie charges

One by one, all 270 names of the Lockerbie bomb victims were read out yesterday to the two Libyans suspected of blowing up Pan Am Flight 103. On their first full day in Scottish custody Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi and Lamine Khalifa Fhimri sat for two hours as Dumfries and Galloway police read out the detailed warrant outlining all the charges against them.....Page 10

Stocks soar to a record

The stock market surged to a record high bolstered by a flood of last minute PEP investments and hopes of another interest rate cut. The FTSE 100 index of leading shares closed up 85.3 at 6415.3, having earlier reached 6422.9.

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BALKANS WAR: THE ATROCITIES

Russian viewers finally see case for Nato

FROM ANNA BLUNDY IN MOSCOW

NTV, Russia's most independent television station, has shocked viewers this week with its coverage of the "ethnic cleansing" by the Serbs in Kosovo. Its recent reports from the region are the first public admission that the Serbs, so vociferously supported in Russia, may have provoked Nato's bombing campaign.

Konstantin Borovoi, a Duma deputy who is in favour of the Nato strikes, ended his five-day hunger strike yesterday when radio and television stations finally allowed him to air his anti-Serb views. He refused all food from April 1 in protest at what he considered to be biased media coverage.

"The pro-Serb propaganda campaign has been executed in the old Soviet way," Mr Borovoi said. "Primakov is not just the Prime Minister, but the leader of a political group with the conscience of the KGB." He complained that the pro-Nato demonstration he and his followers had planned had been banned.

Only after the ground-breaking coverage by NTV did other radio and television stations follow suit, admitting that their reports were subject to Serbian military censorship. Novaya Gazeta ran a commentary by Andrei Piontovsky of the Centre for Strategic Studies suggesting that blind support for the Serbs may be misguided.

Yevgeni Kiselyov, presenter of NTV's weekly news programme *Izlogi*, acknowledged that his influential change in stance was in large part related to domestic issues. "I understand that anti-Nato, anti-Western, anti-American hysteria could lead to a situation when we would have restored Communist Party rule," Mr Kiselyov told the *Moscow Times*.

Vladimir Kulistikov, NTV's chief news editor, attributed the new-style coverage to the fact that Pavel Lobkov, Russia's answer to John Simpson of the BBC, had got into Macedonia and interviewed refugees. Mr Borovoi said he was delighted the media had come to their senses.

Victims' reports 'reveal system of abuse'



US war crimes expert says testimonies show Serbs are carrying out ethnic cleansing policy, Philip Webster writes

WAR crimes and genocide are being committed in Kosovo on a massive scale as Serbs systematically kill or force out the Albanians in Kosovo, according to a graphic account by America's special ambassador on war crimes.

Across the country families are being given five minutes to pick up what they can and clear out of their homes forever. If they refuse, they are shot or burnt, David Scheffer said. He has concluded that Serb actions in Kosovo amount to "evil" and said that Serb commanders on the ground should understand that they would be pursued for the crimes they are committing.

Mr Scheffer, who reports to Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, spent two days at Braco, on the Kosovo-Macedonia border last week interviewing refugees.

Without disclosing his identity, Mr Scheffer spoke to about 200 refugees during 16 hours of interviews assisted by an interpreter. In an interview with *The Times*, he said there was a "remarkable consistency" in the accounts and the pattern of Serb behaviour.

Serb police and paramilitaries entered towns and villages and moved neighbourhood by neighbourhood to carry out "ethnic cleansing".

"They do this by approaching each home with Kosovo Albanians in them. They do not touch those with Serbs in them. They barge through the doors and give residents five minutes to clear out forever," he said. "When the Kosovans are scrambling to pick up anything they can find, food and warm clothing, the police and military shake them down" for cash and jewellery.

"Once they are out, the

homes are torched — unless the house is a nice or comfortable one, in which case sometimes it is occupied by the military. Those who resist are killed. They are either shot in the home or left inside to burn to death when the house is torched.

"Witnesses told me that there was no discrimination. Elderly ladies are killed or burnt in the same way as young men. No particular sector of society is safe. I heard this account so many times from so many people that it is clearly premeditated and planned. The same pattern seems to be emerging everywhere."

Mr Scheffer said that the refugees were then marched onto buses or to Pristina train station. As they moved out of their towns and villages, the Serbs who have been their neighbours stand on the side of the road applauding their departure. Some refugees said that during the night-time assaults on their homes the soldiers were joined by local Serbs.

Mr Scheffer said that all the refugees that he had interviewed wanted to return to Kosovo, but most of them wondered whether they could ever again live side-by-side with Serb neighbours who had helped with their eviction.

The ambassador said that another common tactic was that the forced marches were accompanied by snipers. Anyone deviating from the straight marching line would be picked off. "This is a very common tactic to discipline and intimidate the ethnic cleansing process," he said.

Another common approach of the Serbs was to force the refugees to drop all the food and



An aerial view of refugee tents at Brazde, Macedonia, where reports of massacres inside Kosovo are growing

clothing they had picked up before rushing out of their homes. "It is deliberate. When they crowd on to the train platform at Pristina, they do not have any belongings. They arrive at the Macedonia border destitute, hungry and cold."

Mr Scheffer said that this deprivation of basic needs was one more war crime that could be added to the charge sheet being assembled against the Serb leadership and its men.

Another war crime was the deliberate withdrawal of medical care for the Kosovo Albanians. "The hospital in Pristina has been evacuated. I was told that paralysed Albanians had been left in the hospital and one person told me... that they had been shot."

Finally, Mr Scheffer said,

the conditions of travelling were inhumane. There were 300 people packed into each carriage of a 21-car train. "I watched a train arrive in Braco. It was an amazing sight. As it stopped people flowed out like a tidal wave."

'Elderly ladies are killed in the same way as young men'

Mr Scheffer, who has just reported to Mrs Albright, concluded that ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity were occurring on a large scale.

"What is happening is so systematic, so well planned in its execution, that there are clear

indicators of genocide occurring in Kosovo. Intent is a critical element of the law of genocide. When you look at the facts on the ground, you see clear indicators of intent," he said. "These are massive crimes against humanity."

□ Skopje: The latest refugees forced from their homes in Pristina brought new evidence yesterday of how the Serbs are carefully organising the complete ethnic cleansing of Kosovo's capital (Daniel McGroarty writes).

Paramilitary gunmen are

using public records to systematically ensure entire Albanian families are evicted and immediately replaced in their homes and businesses by Serbs.

Zogë Idrizi, a 28-year-old computer programmer, described how masked men worked their way along the street of apartment blocks where she lived in the suburb of Ulicana.

"They knew exactly which homes were occupied by Albanians," she said.

An OSCE monitor said: "They have Serb families assigned to Albanian properties before the occupants are out. This is to make sure those evicted can never return."

James Pettifer, page 18
Letters, page 19

BALKANS SUMMARY

US Cuba base for refugees

Washington: America is to house 20,000 ethnic Albanian refugees in the US naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, which the United States considers as its territory (Ben Munnery writes). The base, formerly used to house Haitian and Cuban refugees, would be ready to receive Albanians driven out of Kosovo in a few days, US officials said.

But a Cuban government official strongly criticised the plan. "The American aggressors in Yugoslavia have no right to bring these people to Cuba," said Raúl Taladrá. "The refugee problem is a European problem."

Washington is also considering Guam as a potential site to harbour the refugees.

British appeal

Thousands of people inundated charity hotlines last night to donate to an appeal by 12 British aid agencies to help the Kosovo refugees. The appeal was launched on BBC TV by Jill Dando, the presenter, and on ITV by Juliet Stevenson, the actress. It is being coordinated by the Disasters' Emergency Committee.

Sharon warning

Jerusalem: The Israeli Foreign Minister, Ariel Sharon, warned the West that Islamic states could form a greater Albanian bloc that would spread unrest throughout Europe. He told Israeli Radio: "We can certainly see here a focus of activity that would cause unrest."

Australia haven

Sydney: Australia has decided to allow 4,000 Kosovan refugees into the country on a temporary basis, after being criticised for not pulling its weight in the Balkans crisis (Roger Maynard writes). The about-turn came after mounting pressure from ethnic communities.

Nato escape

Sarajevo: A rocket-propelled grenade missed a patrolling Nato UH60 Black Hawk helicopter over Serb-run territory in northern Bosnia. Its crew saw an object in front of them after seeing a flash on the ground near Teslic (AFP).

Border killing

Athens: Greek border guards shot and killed an ethnic Albanian woman who was among four people trying to cross into the country from Macedonia. Police said they had ignored warnings to stop. (Reuters)

US lulled by Hollywood myth of bloodless war

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN WASHINGTON

AN AMERICAN soldier is trapped in the combat zone, battling a versatile enemy in hostile terrain: that familiar scenario, repeated in countless Hollywood films from *Rambo* to *Saving Private Ryan*, is inching closer to reality in Kosovo as pressure grows to use US ground troops.

A poll published yesterday in *The Washington Post* showed public opinion shifting dramatically in favour of ground forces going in, with 55 per cent saying they would support a policy change. Just a week ago, barely 40 per cent favoured using US infantry.

Foreign policy experts, politicians and retired soldiers, too, have joined a swelling chorus calling for ground troops, while unnamed military officials have begun popping up in numbers to claim that they had told the Administration from the outset that combat troops would be necessary.



American hero Tom Hanks, right, in *Saving Private Ryan*

America, confronting the reality that Serb forces will not be stopped with cruise missiles alone, has sent Apache helicopter gunships to strike President Milosevic's army — a decision that has been interpreted as a step closer to sending in troops. The Apaches, supported by 2,000 soldiers, Bradley Fighting Vehicles and

multiple rocket launchers, may not technically fit the definition of ground forces, but they are specifically designed to hit troops on the ground or, to use the Pentagon's tag-line of the week, to get "up close and personal" with the enemy.

The decision to use the Apaches has raised further questions about

whether air combat ends and ground engagement begins. A recent cartoon showed President Clinton firing the Kosovo sky with paratroopers and helicopters, while observing: "Of course it depends what you mean by ground troops."

Yet the US remains deeply wary of sending such forces across Kosovo's borders, knowing that the first body bag will send support for action spiralling downwards. The wave of panic that swept the Pentagon and White House during the hours that rescue troops scrambled to retrieve a single downed pilot is an illustration of sensitivity to possible military losses.

Here, too, Hollywood has played its part, propagating the myth that war can be fought with minimal casualties. Rare is the movie that shows the embattled soldier-hero dying behind enemy lines; *Rambo* gets away; *Private Ryan* was, after all, saved. The same unreal approach is reflected in the polls, which show that more

than 80 per cent of Americans believe the US should send a snatch team to rescue the three soldiers held by Belgrade.

The story of Scott O'Grady, the US pilot shot down over Bosnia and then rescued, was the subject of a bidding war for film rights, but the equally true story of the US soldiers beaten to death by a mob in Somalia, was not.

In its determination to show that Kosovo will not be another Vietnam, America has oversold the potential of air power, raising impossibly high expectations of success and low expectations of casualties. US officials continue to insist, although less and less emphatically, that there is "no intention" to use ground troops.

Aerial bombardment allows President Clinton to keep control of the script, restricting bloodletting. A ground war, however, would turn this war from American family viewing into a gory epic, with no guarantee of that Hollywood happy ending.

FATE OF KOSOVO REFUGEES	
Numbers in the Kosovo refugee crisis from governments and international organisations:	
Population of Kosovo	1,956,196 (1991 census)
Ethnic Albanians in Kosovo	more than 2,600,000 (unofficial estimate)
Displaced from Kosovo homes in past year	831,000 (NATO spokesman on Monday)
Fled or expelled from Kosovo since NATO began air attacks on March 24	over 400,000 (UNHCR Tuesday)
Hiding inside Kosovo	250,000 (NATO Sunday)
Admitted to Albania	270,000 (OSCE Tuesday)
In, or on the border with, Macedonia	130,000 (Macedonian officials Tuesday)
Admitted to Yugoslav rep. of Montenegro	35,700 (UNHCR Monday)
Admitted to Bosnia	7,900 (UNHCR Monday)
Admitted to Turkey	6,000 (UNHCR Monday)
Flown from Macedonia to Turkey	about 1,400
Flown to Norway	81
Sanctuary offered or proposed:	
EU/NATO as a whole (German government Sunday):	100,000
Germany (Sunday)	40,000
Austria (Monday)	5,000
United States (Sunday)	20,000
Canada (Sunday)	5,000
Turkey (Sunday)	20,000
Greece (Sunday)	5,000
Norway (Sunday)	6,000
Denmark (Sunday)	6,000
Sweden (Sunday)	5,500
Romania (NATO Monday)	up to 6,000
Australia, for three months (Tuesday)	up to 4,000
Britain has offered to take "thousands" without giving a specific figure	

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BALKANS WAR: GROWING ARSENAL

Influx of new arms bolsters allies

By MICHAEL EVANS

THE American decision to deploy the Gulf War-proven Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) in Albania to strike at Yugoslav military facilities will significantly increase the firepower available to Nato commanders. One of the weapons that caused such destruction in the Gulf War, the MLRS is an "area weapon system", using powerful rockets to distribute hundreds of high-explosive bomblets within the chosen target location. There are two versions of the MLRS, the standard one, which has two six-pod launchers firing a total of 12 rockets, each containing 644 bomblets known as "dual-purpose improved conventional munitions"; and a later version armed with two Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS), each one firing 950 tennis ball-sized anti-personnel and anti-material bomblets. General Sir Charles Guthrie, the Chief of the Defence Staff, indicated earlier this week that the Americans would be sending the ATACMS version because it had a range of about 100 miles, putting much of Kosovo within its sights. Christopher Foss, the editor of *Jane's Armour and Artillery*, said that the standard MLRS had a range of only about 20 miles, which would limit its scope for strikes into Kosovo. The standard version is used against "soft targets", such as troops and light vehicles, but the MLRS being sent

to Albania will have as its targets a range of military facilities including surface-to-air missiles, air defence sites, command and control networks and logistics centres. When the standard MLRS made its debut in the Gulf War, deployed by both the US Army and British Army, it was claimed that each of the 12 individual rockets could

devastate an area the size of a football pitch. The MLRS with the more powerful and longer-range ATACMS rockets can do similar damage but over an area twice the size. There is nothing in the Yugoslav Army's inventory that can match such a powerful weapon. The ATACMS version was

rushed into service for the Gulf War but, according to Mr Foss, only 32 were fired out of a total of 105 sent to the Gulf. The MLRS is a highly mobile weapon system. The crew manning it engages in what is called shoot-and-scoot tactics. Once the rockets have been fired, the MLRS is moved rapidly to another location before

the enemy can pinpoint its position and return fire. It also has excellent cross-country ability and has a road speed of up to 40mph. Nicknamed "steel rain", the MLRS has a computerised fire control system that enables the three-man crew, or even a single soldier, to load and unload the launcher. The computer gives instruc-

tions to the crew and checks the condition of the missiles prior to launch. A command post transmits the selected target data directly to the MLRS launcher's computer. When activated, the computer aims the launcher and prompts the crew to arm and fire a pre-selected number of rounds. The only problem with the MLRS, Mr Foss said, was

that the bomblets did not have self-destruct fuses. This meant that there was a real risk that those bomblets that failed to detonate would lie around, posing a potential hazard for civilians or for allied troops passing through at some future date if a peace implementation force was sent to Kosovo. Manufactured in America

by Lockheed Martin, the MLRS is in service with 13 other countries, apart from the United States and Britain. They include Turkey, Greece, Bahrain, Denmark, Japan and South Korea. A more advanced version, which is not yet in service, will be guided by the satellite-linked Global Positioning System.

MULTIPLE LAUNCH ROCKET SYSTEM (MLRS)

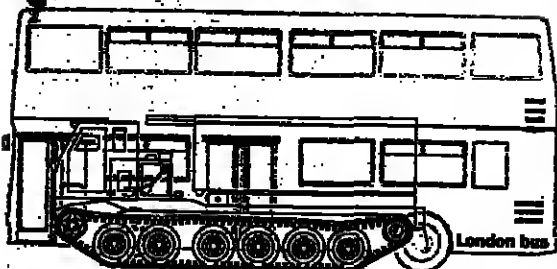
THE MLRS MISSION

As an "area weapon system", the MLRS being sent to Albania will fire the 100-mile range Army Tactical Missile System at Yugoslav surface-to-air missiles, air defence sites and military logistics centres.

MLRS SPECIFICATION

Length: 22ft 4in
Weight: 24.8 tonnes
Range: 300 miles
Average speed: 25mph
Crew: 3
Weapons: 12 surface-to-air missiles, or 2 Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) rockets

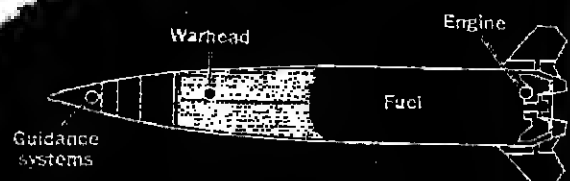
THE MLRS TO SCALE



THE WEAPONS FIRED

ATACMS BLOCK 1 ROCKET

Length: 12ft
Range: 100 miles
Warhead: 950 M74 bomblets



STANDARD MLRS ROCKET

Length: 12ft
Range: more than 20 miles
Warhead: 644 M77 bomblets



AREA OF DAMAGE

Area of blast from MLRS M77 bomblets
Area of blast from ATACMS M74 bomblets

'Long haul' risks wrong outcome

This stage in Nato's air campaign has been reached when it is legitimate to ask: how much longer can Operation Allied Force continue? Will another week or ten days of intensive bombing enable the alliance to fulfil its objectives or are the political warnings of a "long haul" going to commit Nato to a campaign lasting months? George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, was adamant yesterday that the bombing would go on until President Milosevic had agreed to allow all the ethnic Albanian refugees back to their villages to rebuild their homes under the protection of an international force. On that basis, even if the first objective is met, which is to force Mr Milosevic to stop the "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo and to withdraw all his forces, the bombing will carry on regardless. This determination to see it through to the bitter end is clearly intended to send a message to Mr Milosevic that when he comes up with a new "peace" deal, like yesterday's ceasefire offer, it will make no difference to Operation Allied Force unless he agrees to reverse all the damage he has done to the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. The sentiments are understand-

able, but since the Ministry of Defence announced yesterday that 1.1 million ethnic Albanians have now been forced out of their homes in the 12 months since the conflict began — a large proportion of them driven out of Kosovo itself — it is becoming increasingly clear that this objective is going to be the most difficult to meet, perhaps beyond reach. If Mr Milosevic's nerve holds up for another few weeks, Nato has to face up to the reality that its bombers will destroy what was already a weak Yugoslav economy, that they will damage the country's infrastructure, possibly beyond repair — unlike Iraq, Yugoslavia is not blessed with oil revenues — and that they will help to create a country in Europe which will be a seething cauldron of hatred towards the West for decades. This is not a happy prospect for the beginning of the new millennium, nor is it a happy prospect for the alliance which had hoped to be seen as the world's guarantor of peace and stability, the godfather of crisis management, a force for good. Instead, Nato is finishing off the 20th century with an awesome air war against a leader who has re-



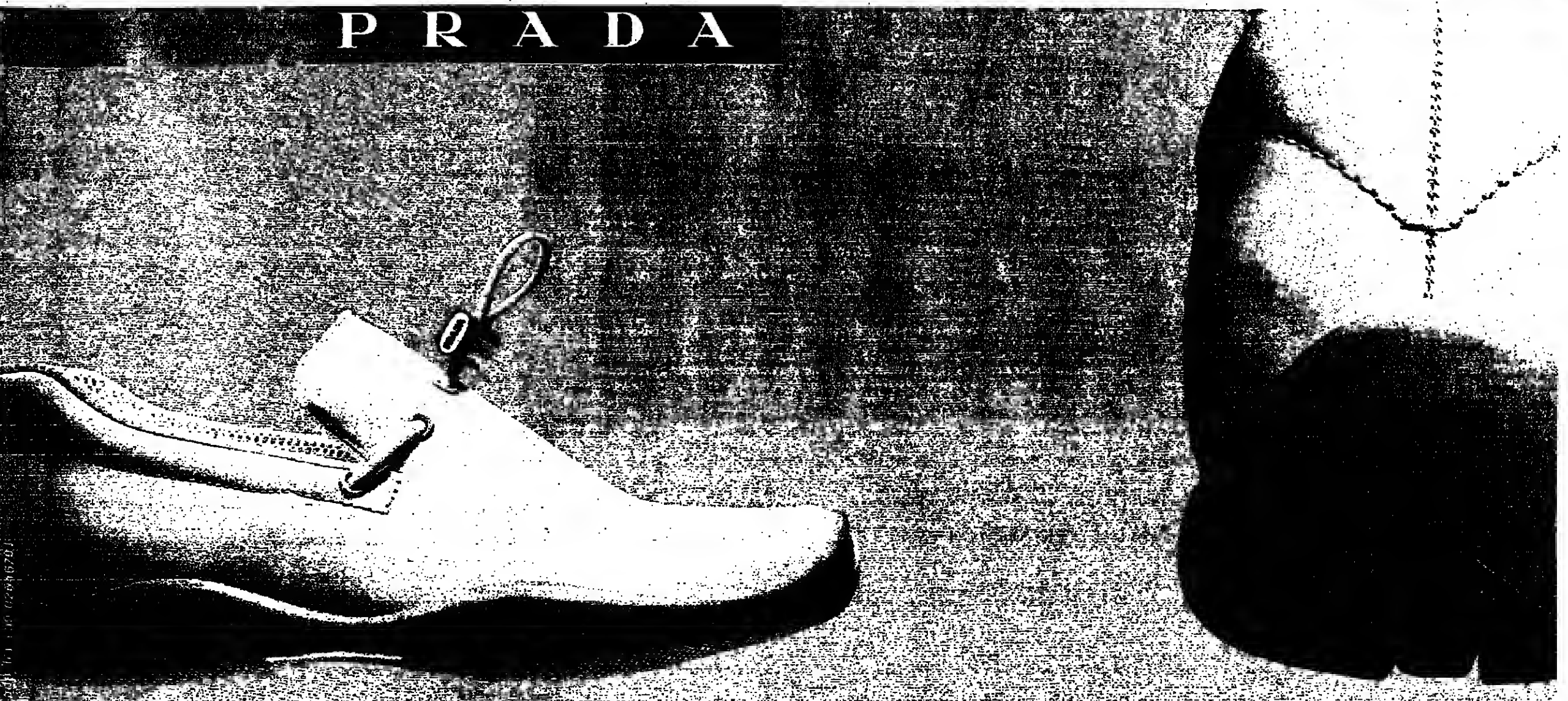
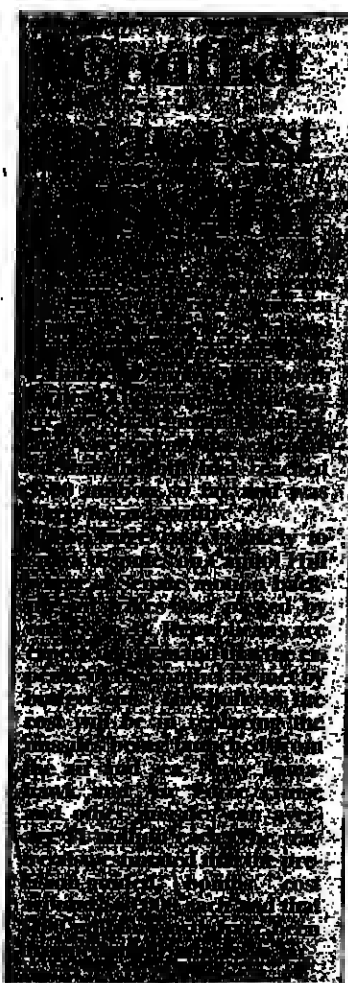
What happens if the allies extend the bombing to destroy Yugoslavia's infrastructure which, unlike Iraq's, is not supported by oil revenue? Michael Evans, Defence Editor, reports on the dilemma confronting Britain and the US

vived all the horrific images of the worst excesses of the Nazis in the Second World War. Achieving the right balance in the level of force to be used against Mr Milosevic will be a difficult choice. American officials, before the US-led six-week coalition air campaign in the 1991 Gulf War, talked of bombing Iraq back to the Middle Ages. It was an imprudent remark, wisely ignored by the political leaders who realised that a totally destroyed Iraq would create a dangerous vacuum in the region. Similarly, the total elimination of Yugoslavia's infrastructure, with the destruction of every strategic bridge, oil refinery, power station, rail link and main road, would undermine whatever stability is left in the country once the crisis is over. This is why Nato must be praying that ten more days will be enough to meet those daily repeated objectives. For bombing on the

current scale, assuming the weather remains clear, will cause unbelievable damage in every corner of Yugoslavia if it has to continue for weeks on end. Mr Robertson said yesterday that the airstrikes were "proportionate". While the "ethnic cleansing", rapes and murders continue in Kosovo, there are few, except obviously Mr Milosevic in his secure bunker in Belgrade and the airstrike opponents in Moscow, who would disagree. However, if it is to be a long-haul bombing campaign — months, not weeks — waged in isolation, without the prospect of a land force being sent in to finish off the job in Kosovo, the wholesale destruction could begin to look disproportionate, even though, building for building, the Yugoslav military and paramilitary forces have caused more damage to properties in Kosovo, laying waste whole villages, than

Nato has throughout the whole of Yugoslavia. In the meantime, the principal protagonists on Nato's side — President Clinton and his stalwart Defence Secretary, William Cohen, in Washington, Tony Blair, Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, and Mr Robertson in London — declare with increasing intensity that the bombing will go on until the job has been done. Even if Mr Milosevic fails to back down, Nato hopes that its attacks on Yugoslav forces in Kosovo over the next ten days will reduce their capabilities and their morale to such an extent that Kosovo will become what is being called a "permissive environment", in other words an environment in which Nato troops could be inserted with minimum resistance to begin the process of returning people to their shattered villages. What could be interpreted as pre-

liminary moves for a ground operation are under way, after the Pentagon's announcement on Monday that it was deploying 24 Apache helicopters and 13 Multiple Launch Rocket Systems to Albania, to be part of a bolstered Operation Allied Force. The Apaches and rocket launchers will also come with a "force protection" package consisting of 14 Bradley armoured fighting vehicles and a platoon of about ten Abrams and a platoon of about ten M1A1/M1A2 main battle tanks. So, America's heavy armour is on the way. Although its mission will be to operate from the Albanian side of the border, it will provide the beginnings of vital new assets for the alliance in the Balkans region for possible ground action at a later stage. The Dutch also announced yesterday that they were sending artillery to back up its units in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. But if Nato is serious about its intention to see all the 1.1 million displaced Albanians return to their own homes in Kosovo, it will need a lot more heavy armour in place to provide the right level of protection, even in a so-called permissive environment.



BALKANS WAR: REFUGEE CRISIS

Rebels offer to be Nato's ground force

THE Kosovo Liberation Army yesterday launched a desperate appeal for military aid to defend up to half a million ethnic Albanians in villages the guerrillas still hold against the Serb onslaught and vowed to become "Nato's ground troops" in the Balkan campaign.

In an interview with *The Times* somewhere in northern Albania, Xheladin Gashi, a member of the KLA's general staff and a regional commander, said that his forces needed every kind of weapon.

"There are hundreds of thousands of civilians hiding in the mountains and in villages which we control. But they are in pockets and they could soon be overrun. We need weapons to defend them or the Serbs will overrun them," he said.

Listing a group of villages mostly in the west of Kosovo close to the border with Montenegro and Albania, he insisted that time was running out for his fighters who might soon be forced to retreat and leave the civilian population to the mercy of Serbs.

"We can protect our people ourselves. We now have more volunteers from all over Kos-

Sam Kiley hears an urgent plea by guerrilla leader for anti-tank guns

ovo, Albania, western Europe and America, than we have weapons. We really need to have anti-tank guns. At the moment our men are trying to fight tanks with rifles," Mr



Gashi: confronting Serb tanks armed with rifles

Gashi, a former Yugoslav Army officer who has been high on the wanted list of the Serb secret police, said, "If they have to retreat, they can carry on a guerrilla war, but the civilians will be slaughtered."

Nato members have been struggling with how to defend Kosovo's diminishing population of Albanians against Serb attacks without committing large numbers of ground troops to what would be a bloody campaign. They have been equally reluctant to arm or train the KLA for fear that this would imply a tacit recognition of the guerrilla movement's demands for independence from Yugoslavia.

There has been some acceptance that few Kosovo Albanians would ever return home to a country with any kind of a formal tie to Belgrade. But there remains the problem that the KLA has been divided and, since the Serbian attacks, its command structure has been almost shattered.

If the KLA were given weapons, the guerrillas would need close supervision to prevent the guns being turned on Kosovo's Serb minority.



Hugging a child, an Albanian weeps on a refugee bus at Petrovec Airport, Macedonia. The refugees were herded onto a flight to Turkey despite leaving relatives behind

Turkey greets 1,200 exiles with hot meal

FROM REUTERS IN KIRKLARELI, TURKEY

MORE than 1,000 Kosovo refugees settled yesterday in prefabricated huts in western Turkey after being airlifted out of neighbouring Macedonia.

Officials said 1,200 people had been admitted to the camp in serene Balkan countryside near Kirklareli, close to Turkey's border with Bulgaria. Two more busloads of refugees stood outside the camp waiting to be processed.

But inside the barbed-wire perimeter children played and women hung out washing among the huts that were once home to a previous influx of refugees from Bosnia.

"Everybody here has been separated from their families. Macedonian police let only women and children on the planes," said Leke Zogaj, 18, who said he had spent three days without food and water in the no-man's-land between Kosovo and Macedonia. "I was only allowed to come because I was ill."

The first of the Kosovo Albanians to be airlifted out of Macedonia arrived late on Monday in Turkey, reeking and unwashed, and were transferred on buses to the nearby camp. One elderly woman carried off the plane died in a local hospital.

The regional Governor said all refugees received a hot

meal as soon as they arrived at the camp. Many more of the thousands stranded in the fields on the edges of Macedonia are expected to arrive in Turkey in the coming days.

"The army is taking care of their food needs and is in the process of putting up tents nearby," the Governor, Kemal Onal, said. Four lorries stacked with mattresses and vegetables drew up outside the camp.

Turkey has pledged to accommodate up to 20,000 of those who have fled Kosovo for neighbouring Balkan countries. Turks feel deep historical and religious ties with the ethnic Albanian majority in Kosovo and the province's small Turkish minority resulting from 500 years of Ottoman rule of the Balkans.

Bulent Ecevit, the Turkish Prime Minister, said Nato would ensure that the refugees eventually returned. "We don't want to see a Kosovo cleansed of Kosovans."

Turkey's Red Crescent sent 13 lorries loaded with 64 tonnes of food, medicine and tents from Ankara yesterday bound for Albania. Another eight trucks were to be sent from Istanbul. It has contributed aircraft to the Nato action and says it can send ground troops if called upon.

UN issues emergency identity documents

THE plight of Kosovo refugees who have been stripped of their papers is being eased by the issuing of temporary documents that certify their identities, the United Nations relief operation said yesterday.

Officials from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees are supplying provisional papers on the spot to all deportees robbed of their documents by Serbian forces before being allowed to cross the frontier.

"Taking away identity papers and ripping off car licence plates is as much a waste of time as barbaric. You cannot deprive people of their identity by just taking away their papers," said a UN spokesman in Geneva. "The simple statement of identity is being treated with the same weight as the actual papers."

The biggest problem concerned a small number of unaccompanied children who were too young to know their names, said the UN. Officials were seeking friends and relatives to trace their identities.



Measures are being taken to stop Serbs from stripping refugees of their past, writes Charles Bremner in Brussels

Nato and allied governments have accused the Serbs of waging an "Orwellian" campaign to deprive refugees of their culture and past by removing all documents and blowing up municipal archives in Kosovo to destroy title deeds, land registry papers and marriage records.

Nato reported yesterday that many refugees were also being forced to sign away their property rights "in exchange for a train ticket to oblivion". The practice was now well documented and would add to evidence being gathered for the prosecution of Serbian officials for war crimes, said Jamie Shea, the Nato spokesman. Stripping people of their records fell into the war crime

category and those responsible would eventually be punished, said Mr Shea.

The possession of papers had no bearing on the selection of refugees being evacuated from the region to other countries, said the UN.

The international relief operation was now insisting that all evacuation flights left with full passenger manifests, so displaced Kosovans could be traced. The UNHCR said it was concerned that the majority of the 1,360 Kosovans who were flown to Turkey on Monday had not been properly registered before they left.

"A special UNHCR team is en route to Skopje to handle future refugee registration," the organisation said yesterday.

Ceasefire 'is just a ploy'

Continued from Page 1 stand this proposal. Nato would never consider such an offer and Belgrade must have known this.

It was the second offer from Belgrade, following the aborted peace mission of Yevgeni Primakov, the Russian Prime Minister. The first offer, of a partial withdrawal of Yugoslav troops from Kosovo, was also dismissed by Nato.

The move by Mr Milosevic last night was seen as the latest evidence that the bombing campaign was beginning to have a significant impact on the Yugoslav leadership. The timing of the announcement was also being linked in Nato capitals to the fact that Mr Milosevic was now approaching the completion of his ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.

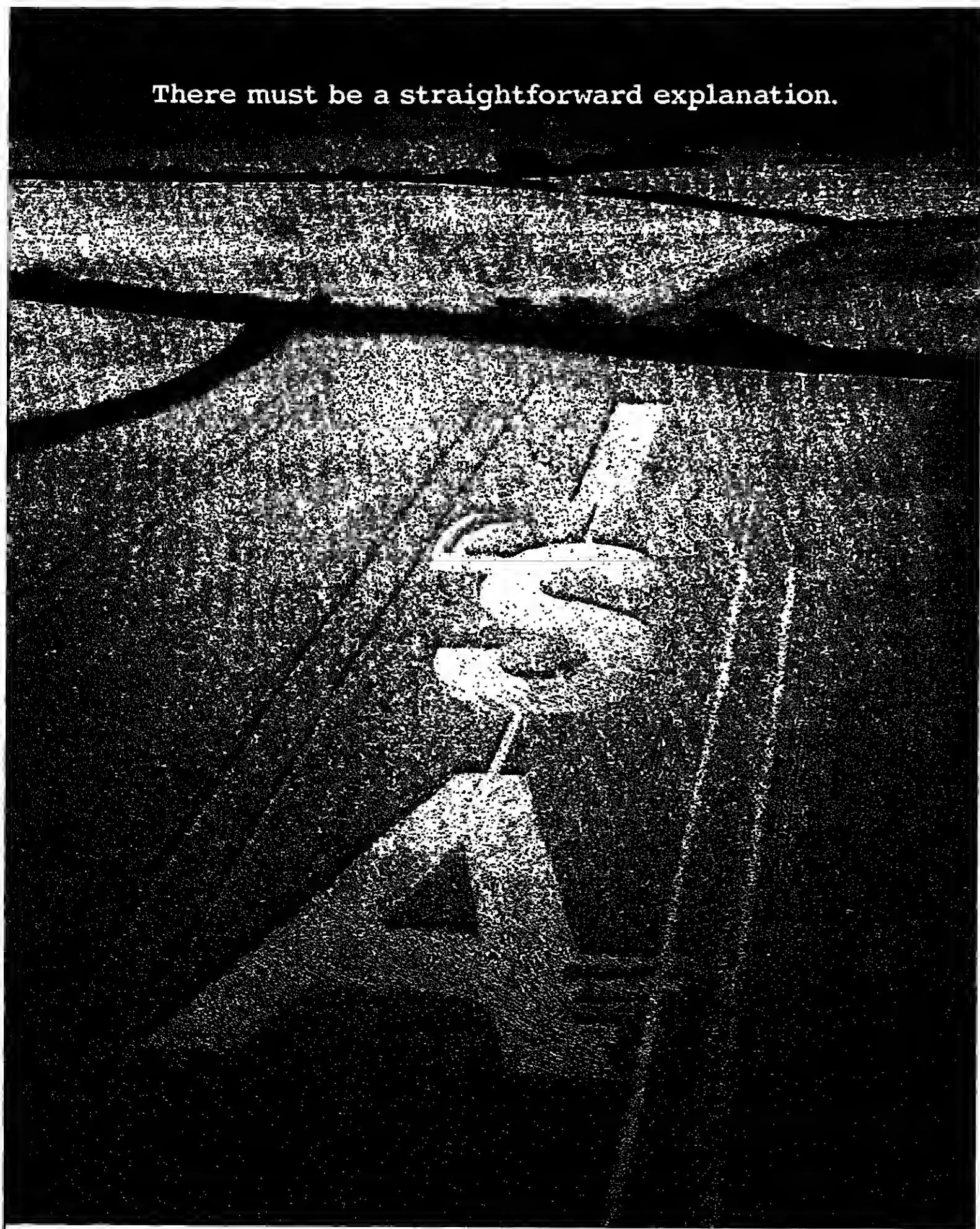
Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, said Mr Milosevic knew that Nato could not stop its bombing until all his troops had left Kosovo, refugees were allowed home and there was an international force under Nato command to guarantee the peace.

Milan Kormanec, the Yugoslav Information Minister, told French television that he was not surprised by the rejection of what he called a good-will gesture.

The determined mood of the alliance to ignore the offer was given added emphasis after a day in which Nato bombers were thought to have achieved successes against Yugoslav troops and armour in Kosovo.

There was also one fatal bombing raid which ended in the deaths of 12 civilians and a wounded 28 more in the mining town Aleksinac. Nato admitted that it may have dropped a bomb in error on a block of flats.

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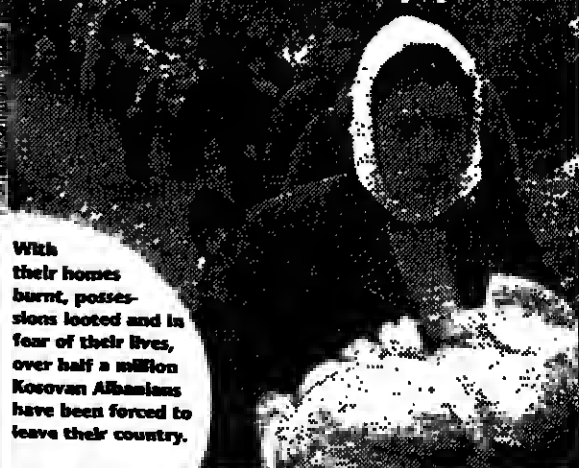


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Kosovo Refugee Emergency Appeal



With their homes burnt, possessions looted and in fear of their lives, over half a million Kosovan Albanians have been forced to leave their country.

Undergoing treacherous journeys, they are crossing the borders traumatised, tired and with little more than the clothes they left in. The majority are women, children and the elderly.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is the lead UN agency providing humanitarian assistance to these people.

Co-ordinating and working in close collaboration with all agencies involved, UNHCR is desperately trying to meet the increasing demand for tents, mattresses, blankets, medical supplies plus the trucks to deliver the aid. YOUR HELP IS NEEDED.

Please support this appeal NOW by using the form below or making a credit card donation by telephoning the CAF credit card hotline on: 01732 520111 (8am-4.30pm Mon-Fri only)

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Or please debit my Visa/Amex/Diner/Amcard

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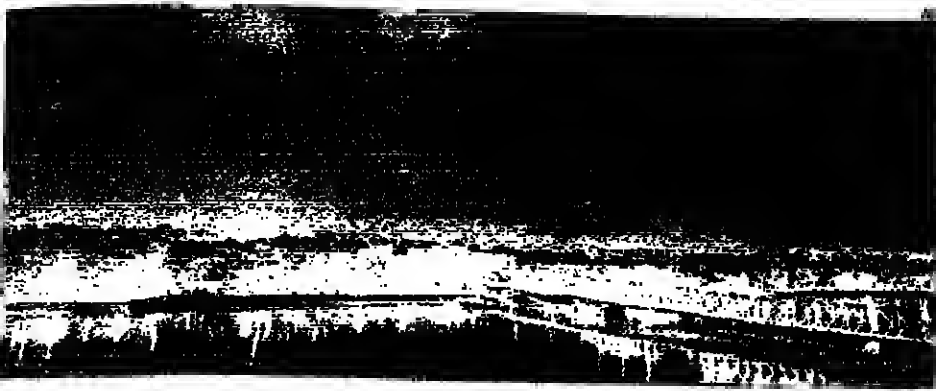
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BALKANS WAR: NATO TARGETS



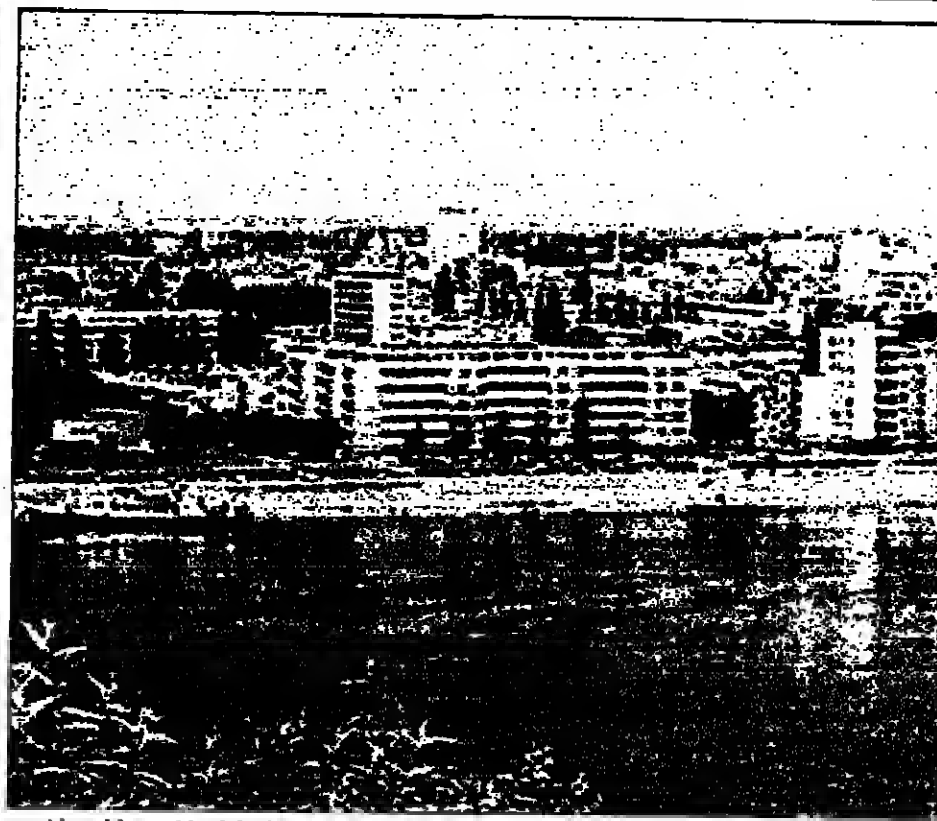
Air raids scar city of culture on the Danube

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

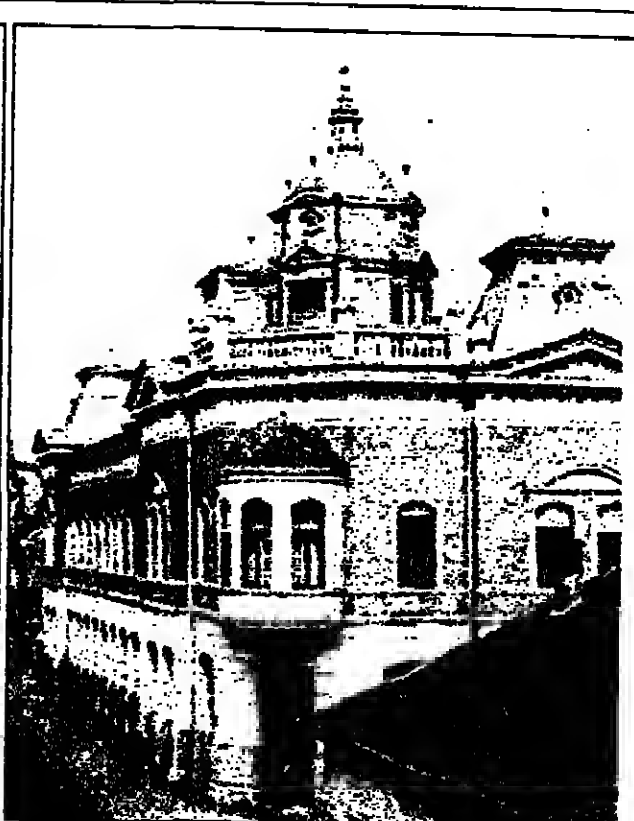
NOVI SAD, once known as the Athens of Serbia, has become one of NATO's major targets in its air war against President Milosevic. Yet, as I recall it, there was little of military significance in or around this rambling city, bursting with pubs and full of Hungarians, Slovaks and Romanians drinking coffee in the Viennese rather than Belgrade manner. It was the early 1990s and I was researching a profile of Monica Seles, the tennis player, a Novi Sader of Hungarian origin, and it was plain that the Danube city's military tradition had ended in 1849. Then, the garrison at Petrovaradin, the fortress high above the grey Danube, was under Austrian control but went over to Hungarian rebels under Kossuth. From the fortress they bombarded Croat troops. Two thirds of the city's buildings were destroyed. Some months later, in 1850, a German traveller remarked on "the magnitude of the disaster which has befallen the most admired and well-to-do town". Now the city is under bombardment again. On Monday night it was the oil refinery; a few days earlier it was the

bridge across the Danube. River traffic is blocked. Nato officials say the bombing of the bridge demonstrated the pinpoint accuracy of Allied weaponry since nearby housing blocks were untouched. Yet phone calls to friends in the city paint a different picture, neither as grim as Serbian television propaganda portrays it nor exactly a Goya study of misery. But a sense of resentment pervades the city because, despite trying to keep its distance from Belgrade and from Mr Milosevic, it had been punished so thoroughly. Telephone links are now erratic, electricity flickers on and off for an hour or two. Novi Sad, which means New Orchard, was the capital of the semi-autonomous region of Vojvodina. Mr Milosevic revoked that autonomy as surely as he ended the rights of the Kosovo Albanians. There was less at stake here for the dictator than in Kosovo, but Novi Sad was seen, nonetheless, as the cradle of the cultural and political rebirth of the third nation. It was from Novi Sad that the Serbs petitioned for their national rights under the Habsburgs.

Novi Sad was always more than a Serbian city. In modern Yugoslavia five languages had official status in the city — Serbian, Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian and Ruthenian. When



Air raids on Novi Sad, which has no military targets, have pushed the people of this anti-Milosevic city with its fine buildings closer to Belgrade



Mr Milosevic came to power in 1988 his first move was to engineer, with the help of mass nationalist rallies that were later staged in Kosovo, the ouster of the local Vojvodina leadership. The non-Serbs have never learnt to love Mr

Milosevic or his attempt to turn the last corner of Balkan Central Europe into the first building-block of his plan for a greater Serbia. The splintering of rump Yugoslavia, and with it the end of the dream of greater Serbia, is

the necessary ingredient for Mr Milosevic's political demise. Yet the destruction of "military" targets in this proud, tree-lined city is, as could have been predicted, pushing Vojvodina closer to Belgrade.

When I called friends on Easter Monday, the air-raid sirens had just sounded but they knew there was no point in rushing to the cellars since the destruction of radar systems had given them insufficient notice. To them, the end-

ing of an old poem about Novi Sad must read less true: "The glorious town, it lies by hill and valley. The bridge divides the Danube, boats float down." And now? No bridge, no boats, no glory.

Cluster-bombing ends frustration of Harrier pilots

RAF HARRIER pilots used cluster-bombs for the first time against Serbia yesterday, hitting a variety of mobile targets in Kosovo in a daylight blitz hours after scoring "good hits" on a missile store with laser-guided bombs in a separate night raid near Pristina.

The officer commanding No 1 Fighter Squadron gave a thumbs-up sign from his cockpit to reporters watching by the runway as he taxied back to the hangars at the Gioia del Colle base in southern Italy after the operation. The wings of his fighter-bomber were carrying only two of the four distinctive green and white cluster-bomb canisters that were slung beneath them when he took off at the head of ten Harriers nearly two hours earlier. "A few of the pilots that I have spoken to were confident that they hit the targets," said Group Captain Ian Travers Smith, an RAF spokesman. "They think they have taken out mobile or moving targets. The weapons they were using were RBL755 cluster-bomb units designed for anti-armour and anti-vehicle type targets primarily. There were a variety of targets hit in Kosovo."

Each cluster-bomb canister contains 147 bomblets the size of a beer can that are released when the bombs are dropped. Typically they form a sausage-like pattern that the pilots try to make overlap to cover a large rectangular area with what can be a "devastating" effect on tanks or other armoured vehicles such as those attacking villages in Kosovo, the spokesman said.

Aircrews elated at successful mission, writes John Phillips in Gioia del Colle

The RAF did not immediately say how many bombs were dropped, but reporters counted 20 canisters on five aircraft that took off, but counted only four when they returned.

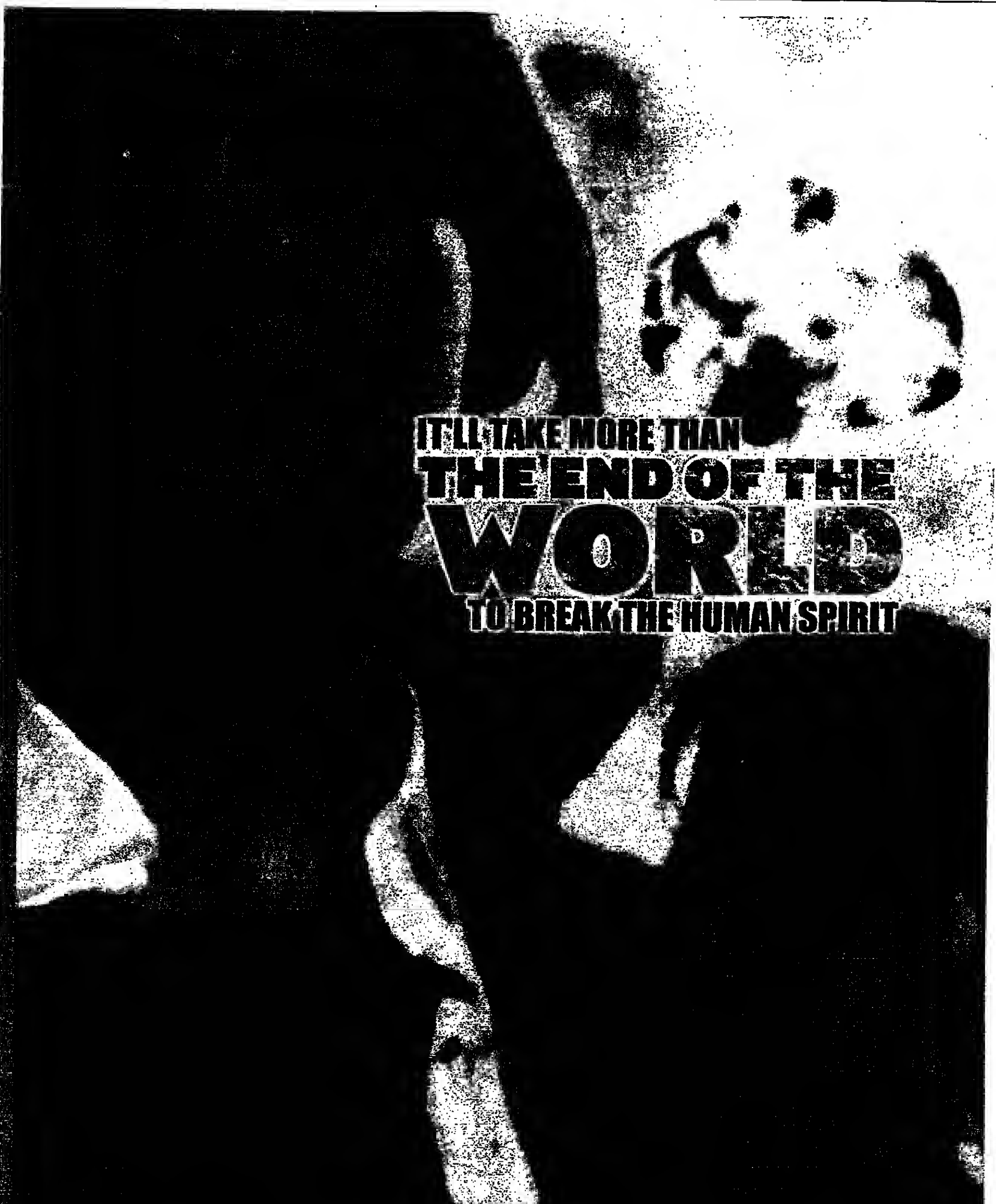
In the early hours of yesterday, the flyers returned from a separate mission during which they dropped laser-guided 1,000lb Paveway II bombs not far from Pristina in a joint operation with RAF Tornados from Bruggen, Germany. The Harriers scored "good hits" against a building believed to contain stores of surface-to-air missiles. Wing Commander Graham Wright, the detachment commander here, said.

The attacks ended a frustrating eight-day period during which the Harriers had been unable to drop bombs, first because of low cloud and then because no mobile targets could be found.

"People were over the moon because we had done something productive," Wing Commander Wright said. "It is a huge rush when you see that these things work. There was a release of tension. It is like when a goal is scored in football and you think 'Yes'. There was some good banter going on."

The previous build-up of frustration was underlined by a poster stuck up on the operations hut used by RAF ground staff working on the Harriers. It was a cover of *Private Eye* magazine lampooning "Winston Blair". "Never have so few bombs been dropped on so many," it quoted him saying. "We will not fight them on the beaches, we will not fight them on the hills, we will not fight them on the streets. They will never surrender."

After the raids the mood was different. "The pilots are professionals who got the results that they were seeking," Group Captain Travers Smith said. "Today they believe they



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BALKANS WAR: THE AIR CAMPAIGN

'Surgical strike' kills 12 civilians

A SIMPLE MAN, a good labourer, husband and father, Dragan Miladinovic had earned little, but he had won the respect of all who knew him.

On Monday night the 67-year-old was killed by Nato, with his wife and daughter, as his neighbourhood was flattened by what Brussels calls precision bombing. "He was mince meat, there was nothing much left of him," said Dragan's closest friend, Vlada Stojilovic, yesterday, as he stared in disbelief at the pile of rubble next to his own partially collapsed house. "We built them together," he added in a monotone, still anaesthetised by shock.

Apart from the Miladinovics, nine others died and 28 were injured in the southern Serbian town of Aleksinac on Monday night, as Nato jets

**Tom Walker in
Aleksinac sees
Nato's innocent
bomb victims**

thundered overhead, dropping a line of bombs that destroyed two areas of homes and an ice-cream factory. A hospital and an old people's home were badly damaged, and there was hardly a pane of glass left intact in the town centre. Nato did land one or two bombs in and around a dilapidated barracks at the town's edge, although yesterday it appeared to have been largely empty.

Aleksinac is a simple place where the now disused coalmine never provided enough



An injured Serb woman comforts her son as they lie in hospital beds at Aleksinac yesterday after Nato bombs destroyed a number of houses in the southern Serbian town

jobs and the few factories worked only at full capacity in Tito's time. Like most Serbs, its 40,000 inhabitants have always kept one foot in their peasant farming past, surviving off the land for much of the past decade. A struggle with ethnic Albanians did not mean much until Monday night, when Nato planners decided to include Aleksinac in the campaign to fracture Slobodan Milosevic's military infrastructure. After the slaughter of the innocents — most of them elderly — that followed,

Aleksinac is bemused about its place in the modern world. "They're bombing us from the air because they're cowards. Why can't they come and fight on the ground?" complained the young soldier taking us round the ruins yesterday. Around him people carried on sweeping up shards of glass, stopping only to look at the foreigners in their midst. "If I could get that Sky Television reporter, I'd hang him," ventured one bystander. The first bomb had completely destroyed eight houses

in Dragoceta Milovanovica Street, one of Aleksinac's poorest areas. When we arrived, two bodies were being lifted from the rubble, covered in blankets, and a third was being driven away in a battered hearse. A worker described how the elderly woman was plucked from the broken concrete and bricks in a sitting position, mouth agape.

In the bomb crater at the centre of the rubble, a leg with a woollen sock on its foot protruded from beneath a joist. A bloodied torso lay a few feet

away. Looking up and around in a wide arc beneath the rising sun, every building was peeling masonry, roof tiles and glass. A few workers made token attempts to find more survivors, but an air-raid siren sent many hurrying to their cellars again.

Kosovka Simonovic, a 69-year-old woman living on the less destroyed side of Dragoceta Milovanovica, said that she had been making coffee at about 9.30 on Friday evening when she heard the planes. "I went to get my uncle and the

ground was already shaking. I stood in a doorway and watched the house fall apart," she said in wide-eyed terror. "As a 13-year-old I was in the bombing in the Second World War," she added, tears muddying her dust-covered face. "Everyone blames Clinton. The Nazis were better than him — at least we knew who the enemy was. By taking my house away, they've taken my life away too."

Her daughter Mitrovka, 48, said: "We are poor people, and what little we had has gone." Among the smashed relics of their lives on the sitting room floor, a faded portrait of Tito looked towards the open sky, where once there stood a roof. Zorica Lukovic, 48, lived on the wrong side of the street, and her father, Jovan, and mother, Sofija, are both dead. A squat woman wearing black, she could barely speak. "What had they done against Nato?" she whispered.

Emerging from an old people's home, Vladimir Jeromin asked where the Russians were in Serbia's hour of need. "What are our brothers doing, they should be fighting for us,"

he said, lifting his trouser leg to show the shrapnel wounds he received from German bombing of Belgrade in 1941 — the 58th anniversary of which fell yesterday.

The Miladinovics lived a few hundred yards away, where the second bomb fell. The scene was the same — rubble, incinerated cars, split trees and collapsed telegraph poles. A doll lay amid the family's destroyed house: school books were scattered all about. A passer-by had picked up a hand-knitted tablecloth and was trying to mend its broken threads, her tears falling on to the pavement.

A woman with immaculate English, Lidia Petrovic, begged us to tell the world: "I lived in London once," she said. "Do people there understand?" A cyclist stopped beside us as we prepared to leave. The shock had subsided and anger was setting in. "I fought on the front in the Second World War and I'm ready to take a rifle in my hands again," he spat. "I'm 71 now, but tell Clinton that Petronia Milovanovic is ready to beat him, the bastard."



The destruction of part of the central residential area of Aleksinac after the bombs struck early yesterday

German pilots in medal dilemma

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

GERMANS, in combat for the first time since the Second World War, face a pressing problem: how to honour the brave in a land without war heroes. Iron Crosses have been abolished — though German Tornados have a vaguely similar cross painted on their fuselages — and there is no medal to pin on the chests of returning pilots.

"For soldiers from France, England, Russia or America it is taken for granted that medals should be attached to uniforms," lamented Die Welt newspaper, Germany, by contrast, is wary of reviving old military traditions.

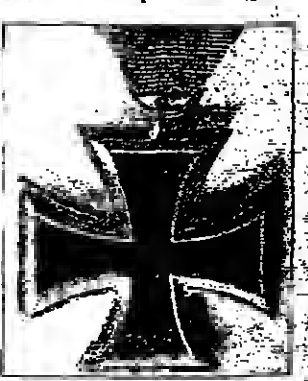
In 1980 a Good Service medal was introduced "for exemplary conduct", and around 6,000 soldiers have won this award. In 1996 a "peacekeeping" medal was established. Both medals have been designed to look like harmless prefect's badges. But so far there is nothing to reward combat valour because Germans have not been involved in armed conflict since 1945.

Reviving the Iron Cross would be controversial, especially for a Social Democrat-controlled Defence Ministry. The Iron Cross, established by King Frederick William III of Prussia in 1813, had three classes — Iron Cross (second class), Iron Cross (first class) and the Grand Cross.

Hitler, who won an Iron Cross (first class) in the First World War, established the Knights Cross, which was positioned between the Iron Cross and the Grand Cross. During the Second World War the Grand Cross was

won only by Hermann Goering, the head of the Luftwaffe. Yet Germans agree that the Tornado pilots have to be recognised for their daily missions over Serbian territory.

The Government is reluctant to discuss openly the success rate of its Tornados but defence sources say they have been hitting their targets, mainly radar systems. "There are always two sides to a war," said one German Army officer. "If we start singing the praises of our pilots, then paci-



Iron Cross, now defunct

fists will complain and the backlash will be stronger if someone gets shot down."

While American pilots paint their "kills" on the sides of their F15s, the German attitude is different: four psychiatrists have been assigned to the Tornado unit in Piacenza to help flight crews cope with their post-bombing trauma.

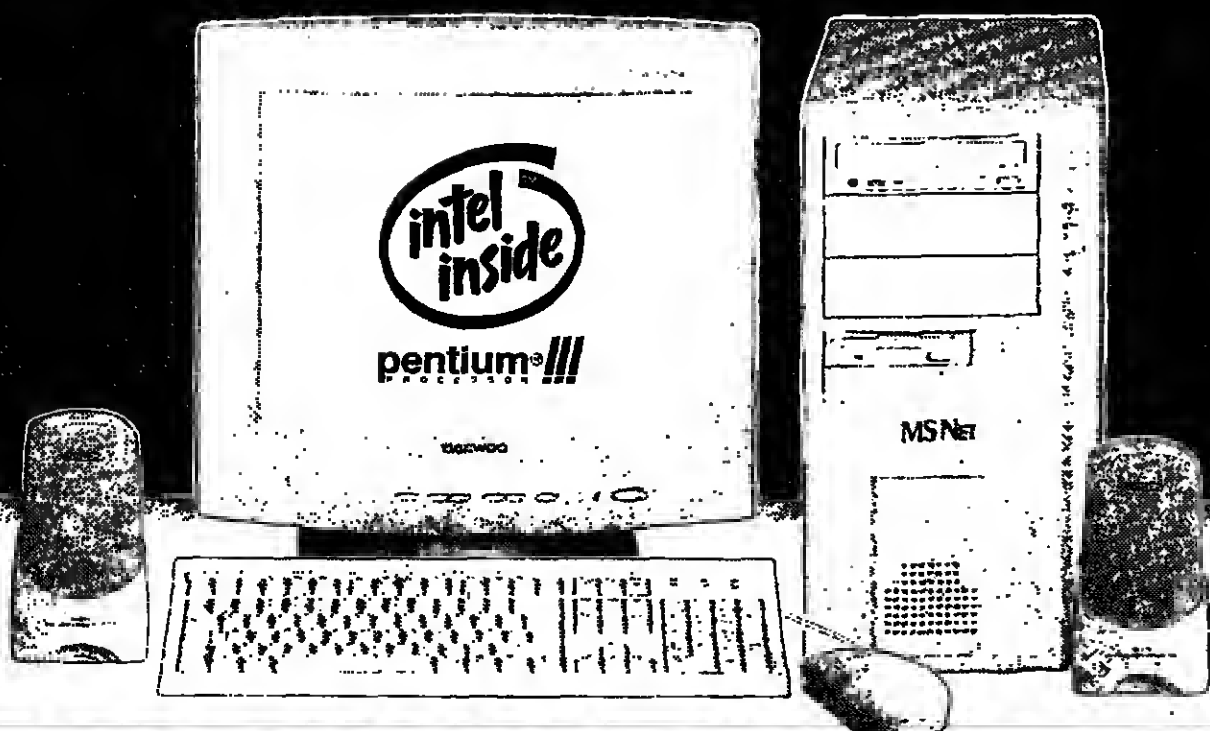
Clearly the Germans would prefer their combat troops to be regarded as victims of a broader war, in need of counselling rather than heroes.

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Parish answers prayers with £1½m collection

A PARSON who appealed to his parish for funds to restore the Victorian church hall found the next morning that his plea had produced nearly half a million pounds.

Canon Patrick Whitworth, Rector of All Saints, Weston, near Bath, prayed for divine intervention when he launched the appeal to restore the hall, a former village school built in the middle of the last century. But even he was surprised to find pledges totalling £438,000 in the collection box placed at the front of the church during morning worship.

Officials at the headquarters of the Church of England in Church House, Westminster, yesterday described it as "another example of the commitment and confidence of the Church today".

All Saints, a thriving evangelical parish, is one of the largest and most generous in Bath and Wells, paying about £80,000 in annual "quota" to the diocese. It has a congregation of between 400 and 500 every Sunday, and, besides a rector and curate with stipends paid from diocesan funds, the church employs a youth worker and administrator from its own funds.

The hall, a Grade II listed building, is to be renovated to create a "mission interface centre", where the church will run

Parishioners raised funds for a community centre overnight, reports Ruth Gledhill

Alpha courses, the introduction to Christianity designed by the country's richest and possibly most successful parish church, Holy Trinity Brompton in Knightsbridge. It will also serve as a centre for youth groups, wedding receptions, playgroups and other community activities.

Canon Whitworth, who spent five years as a curate at Holy Trinity Brompton, before moving to Weston in 1995, said: "I am stunned and thrilled by the amazing generosity shown by everyone."

"Now we have had all this money pledged to us we will probably be approaching trusts outside the church to raise the difference. It is a fantastic project that will benefit not only local churchgoers but also the local community and I am very excited by it."

Villagers had long dreamed of turning the old school into a

modern community hall and conference centre but were put off by the £690,000 estimate for the work.

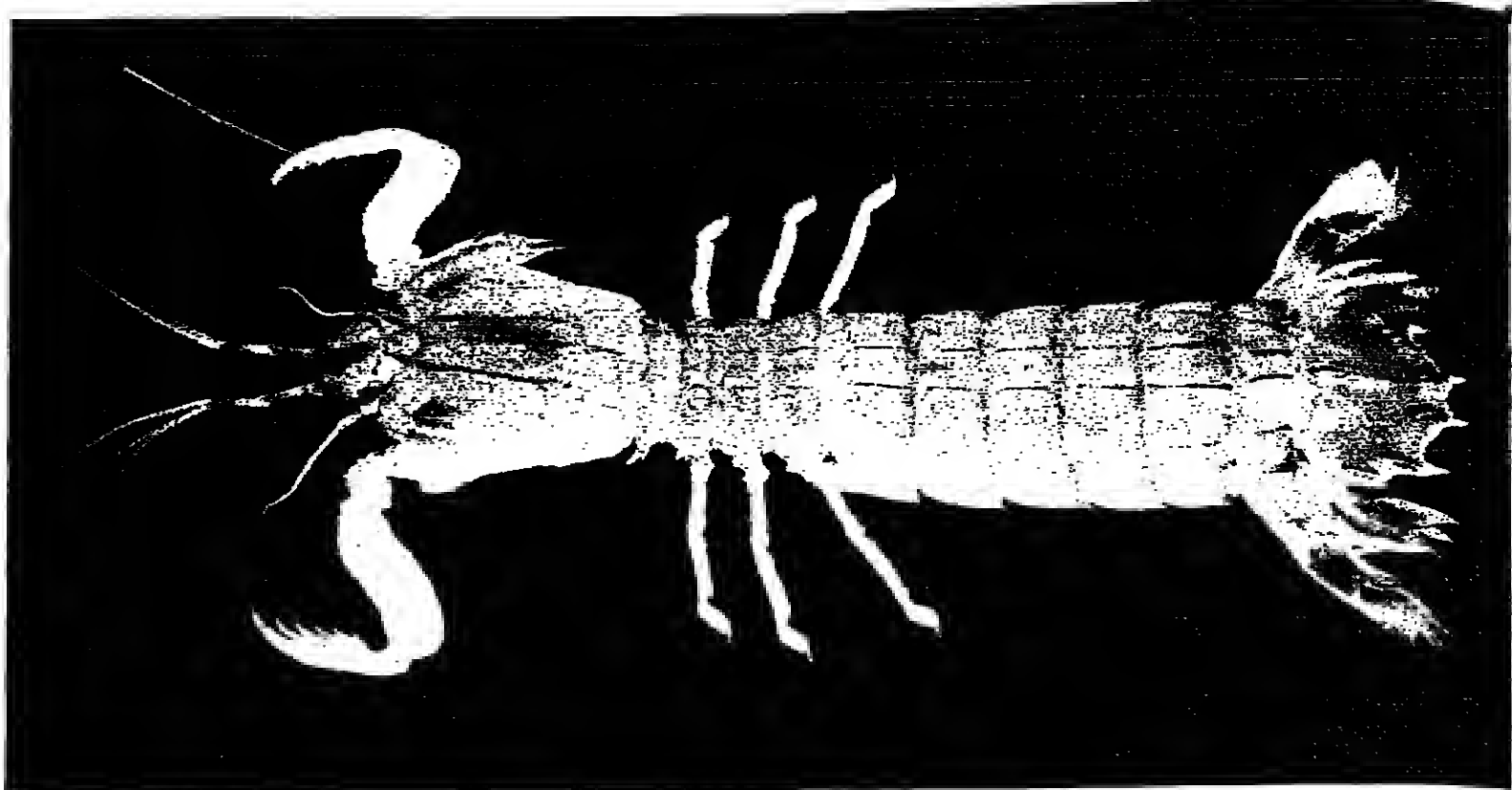
But Canon Whitworth was undeterred and after obtaining planning permission he set about raising the cash, sending details of the plans to nearly 300 church members, parishioners and villagers.

The diocesan development fund contributed £10,000 and a further £10,000 came in from other charitable sources.

But it was after the collection box was placed at the front of the church during morning worship that the cash flowed in. Canon Whitworth spent a week sifting through the slips from 160 addresses and announced the results at the service on Sunday. Most had pledged cash in signed covenants to be spread over four years, while the 25 members of the church council raised £130,000 between them.

With about £438,000 raised, including cash handed in before the church's "Gift Day" — a concept borrowed from Holy Trinity Brompton — villagers still need £220,000.

The Rev John Andrews, spokesman for the Bath and Wells diocese, said: "This is one of the larger churches in the diocese. The people are not rich but they are very generous. This is sacrificial giving."



One of the smaller specimens of the speedy Sun Splitter prawns found in Sydney Harbour, shown here lifesize. It can grow to twice this size

Jurassic prawn's a real cracker

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

FOR Australians, throwing a prawn on the barbecue will never be quite the same. A giant crustacean previously unknown to science, is making its debut on the Australian menu.

It has emerged from Sydney Harbour and dates back to the Jurassic era. Marine biologists have been impressed by the power of this ancient variety of Mantis prawn. It is one of the fastest predators on Earth, able to strike its prey with a claw in 5 to 8 milliseconds, inflicting a deep wound. Its speed has earned it the nickname Sun Splitter. While new to biology, the species, which looks like a cross between a lobster, a prawn and a praying mantis, has been increasingly appearing on local fish stalls. Its size alone will impress the neighbours at the next backyard barbecue. It grows to between 20 and 40 centimetres.

The identification of the giant prawn, which has a 200-million-year ancestry, is part of a two-year research project into crustacea in the coastal waters of New South Wales. Marine biologists believe it is one of the most complex invertebrates found.

While the Mantis prawn is a well-known family of crustacea, this variety has kept out of view. Scientists now plan to use the prawn in neurobiology studies. They are impressed by its advanced eyesight — it is believed to have the most complicated vision of any invertebrate — and its agility. Shane Ahoyong, research fellow at the Australian Museum in Sydney, said: "The speed of strike is one of the fastest animal movements."

The creature has been named *Eragosquilla Grahami* after one of Mr Ahoyong's collaborators, and Mr Ahoyong is in no doubt about the significance of the discovery: "It would be the equivalent of finding a new species of kangaroo."

"One of the lessons from this is that we know far less about marine fauna than we should," he said.

There is no mistaking the monster prawn in the local fish market. It is more than twice the size of the normal variety. But even if it proves increasingly popular with seafood lovers, there is no immediate danger of supplies running out. *Eragosquilla Grahami* is abundant in Sydney Harbour. No one has harvested the species commercially.

Mr Ahoyong said that the abundance is a good sign: "It means there is a huge diversity of life in some areas despite other areas that have been polluted quite horribly."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Girl blown out to sea on dinghy

Rescuers were last night searching for a 12-year-old girl who was blown out to sea on an inflatable dinghy off the Lincolnshire coast near Skegness. As darkness fell, hopes of finding her alive were fading. Coastguards said she had jumped out of her boat when strong winds gusts her away from the beach at Huttoft. The two friends she was with made it back to shore. The parents of the girl, who has not been named, were on the beach, but her father and another man were unable to reach her. A search by two inshore lifeboats, an offshore vessel and an RAF helicopter was suspended at nightfall.

Assault charge

The 18-year-old daughter of Paul Whitehouse, the Chief Constable of Sussex, has been charged with assaulting two of his constables. Frances Whitehouse, from Hove, East Sussex, was arrested as police were investigating a fight between two men in Brighton.

Nun accused

Sister Alphonsa, a 57-year-old nun who was born Marie Docherty, appeared at Aberdeen Sheriff Court to face charges of cruelty against 23 girls at Nazareth House children's homes in Aberdeen and Midlothian between 1962 and 1980. She denies the allegations.

Official cleared

An official at the Radio Authority was cleared of allegations that she accepted a free flight from an Asian community station. Janet Lee, deputy head of programming and advertising, was suspended after claims were made to police.

Red Nose record

Red Nose Day 1999 has smashed previous records and made £27.4 million so far. Comic Relief said the charity extravaganza had made £7 million more than the sum raised by the last Red Nose Day in 1997 at this stage.

Constable jailed

A police constable was jailed for six weeks by magistrates in Liverpool for drink-driving and failing to stop after knocking down a student in his car. Chris Adeniran, 30, who pleaded guilty, is likely to lose his job.

Parrot overdose

Patrice Kinloch, 26, received £330 in an out-of-court settlement at Glasgow Sheriff Court after her pet cockatiel, Jinky, died when a vet injected it with 1,000 times the dose of a drug normally used for cattle to cure the bird's mites.

Lifers spend too long in prison

BY STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

SIXTY per cent of prisoners serving life sentences are spending longer in jail than judges recommended because of inefficiency among prison and probation staff, according to a report from Home Office watchdogs.

One man jailed for the murder of his wife should have been released after eight years but has served a total of 24 years because risk assessments, pre-release training and preparatory work have been constantly delayed.

Sir David Ramsbotham, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, and Sir Graham Smith, the Chief Inspector of Probation, said yesterday that jails were often unprepared for release of life prisoners, resulting in a huge waste of time, and that reconviction rates for those released during a life sentence were much lower than for other offenders.

The report shows that be-

fore capital punishment was scrapped in 1966 the average sentence for a "lifer" was eight years. In 1997 it was 14 years for murderers and 13 years for other criminals, and 296 prisoners had served more than 20 years.

Between 1987 and 1997 the number of life prisoners rose from 2,399 to 3,721 and is set to double by 2007. Sir David said that the increase was caused by legal changes allowing life sentences for offences such as rape and drug dealing.

The Prison Service scheme for handling "lifers" and their release was set up when there was a much smaller number in prison. Sir David said that keeping them in prison longer than necessary was a waste of money and could cause discipline problems within jails.

The Home Office has announced that a steering group will oversee improvements to the system.

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هكذا من الاول

The pay's the thing for business Bard

Executives will study Shakespeare plays to learn how to tread on the board, reports Alan Hamilton

ONCE more into the boardroom, dear friends, once more, or close the wall up with our English dread of the Bard. A management college is turning to Shakespeare for lessons on how to survive in business.

Do you want the art of leadership? Henry V is your man. Want to know how to avoid being stabbed in the back? Learn from Julius Caesar. Got some dirty work to do and haven't the stomach for it? Have a word with Lady Macbeth.

Cranfield University School of Management in Bedfordshire has teamed with the Globe Theatre in Southwark on London's South Bank to offer courses on what Shakespeare can teach today's corporate executive. The idea is the inspiration of Richard Olivier, director son of the man who set a benchmark in Bardic interpretation.

The people who run today's multinational corporations face the same dilemmas and responsibilities as the kings and dukes of 1600," he said yesterday. "Shakespeare is about power and responsibility. He is not a kitchen-sink dramatist."

It is hoped that business careerists will pay £1,000 a seat for a two-day course at the Globe, in which they will not only study the moral questions posed by the Bard but also learn basic techniques of acting — increasingly regarded as an essential adjunct to power in the boardroom where role-playing can be a crucial skill.

The clear favourite among plays for power-players is *Henry V*, an examination of leadership. Nicholas Janni, a visit-

ing fellow at Cranfield who is helping to run the courses, listed the dilemmas facing the English king before Agincourt: "What right does he have to this leadership? How does he deal with traitors, and why did he not see the treachery coming? How does he rally his troops and get them to follow him?"

"Then, as he endures the long dark night of the soul, how much should he role-play and how much should he be himself? Then, with the battle won, how do you turn victory into a garden, and how do you nurture yourself in success?"

Gentlemen in England now abed will clearly think themselves accursed if they miss the course, to be held in June. But there will be others. Shakespeare's potential for management training is endless, according to Olivier.

Julius Caesar is an obvious one, and not just about backstabbing. According to the course organisers, it is about the positive and negative potential of organisational politics, it is about learning to cope with the fallout of betrayal, and it is about the morals of an illegal action and when it is justified. Well, the evil that men do lives after them.

The Merchant of Venice might have lessons for credit card issuers who demand a high annual rates, but it is also a candidate on the Cranfield list for teaching not only issues of justice and mercy but also the difference between male and female perceptions of those ideals. Don't strain yourself, Portia.

Olivier himself is much taken by the didactic potential of

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Desired quality: avoiding becoming obsessed with power for its own sake to the extent that your wife encourages you to murder the chairman. *Study:* Macbeth

Desired quality: knowing what you are supposed to be doing in a business environment that never seems to stand still, with its goalsposts for ever on the move. *Study:* Hamlet

Desired quality: not letting personal distractions get in the way of business decisions. *Study:* Measure For Measure

The Winter's Tale, although given its stage direction of "Bohemia, a desert country near the sea," it should perhaps not be taken entirely at face value. But it is a work about the ever-changing world, and how, when we are fired for being too old, or too fuddy-duddy, or unable to operate the new computer system, we must accept our fate and move on with good grace: "Bequeath to death your numbness; for

from him dear life redeems you."

And, says Olivier, there are lessons in *Measure For Measure* on how human and sexual desires intrude on the path to the chief executive officer's chair: "Hence shall we see if power change purpose, what our seemers be."

And then there is *Macbeth*, which according to Olivier is not so much about getting someone to do your dirty

work, but about the negative role of becoming obsessed with power for its own sake. And therein lies the difference with *Hamlet*. Olivier said: "What kind of a context does one create in which to take action? Hamlet cannot get clear what his context is, and that is a big question for corporate managers; their parameters are becoming ever less clear."

Finally, there is the ultimate challenge of *King Lear*, which might at some future date figure on the Cranfield syllabus. Lear, says Olivier, is a man who wants to half give up his power, yet does not entirely want to lose control.

And there, in Shakespeare's greatest creation, is the nugget of advice for all business people to heed before their old white heads render them beyond improvement courses: "Keep thy foot out of brothels, thy hand out of plackets, thy pen from lenders' books, and defy the foul fiend."

Arts, page 32



A model for today's keen business leader: Henry V, as played by Kenneth Branagh

Accident pilots risked disaster

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY

THE captain of a jet carrying 220 passengers that scraped the ground while attempting to land in a storm apparently relished the challenge and took unnecessary risks, an accident report said yesterday.

The captain of the Airtour International Boeing 757 tried three times to land before heading for another airport with low reserves of fuel. The copilot, 34, failed to challenge his "flawed decisions" on the flight from Birmingham to the Dominican Republic last year, the report said. The captain is alleged by passengers to have joked as he struggled to bring the aircraft down.

After the first attempted landing the aircraft circled the airport at Puerto Plata. A second attempt was also abandoned but the captain and co-pilot tried again, relying on their vision rather than using standard instruments in the cockpit. When the aircraft swung round for the third attempt, the captain's spectacles were dislodged. The pilots failed to stabilise the aircraft at the minimum permitted altitude of 400 ft, but continued their attempt, contravening protocol. The plane veered off the runway, scraping on to scrubland.

The report by the Dominican Republic Authorities, published by the British Air Accidents Investigation Branch, said that Airtour had demoted the captain, 53. He and the co-pilot have since undergone further training.

Helicopter crash man panicked in fog

By HELEN JOHNSTONE

THE helicopter in which a couple crashed into the sea on Easter Monday had flown low over a holiday camp minutes before the accident, it was claimed yesterday.

Paul Burgess, a millionaire businessman, and his wife, Lisa, 27, who is two months pregnant, were recovering at home in Woodburn Green, Buckinghamshire, after spending 90 minutes in icy water off the south coast.

An official at the Devon-based air traffic control centre that monitored the flight claimed that Mr Burgess, 37, may have panicked after he flew into dense fog and became disorientated as his two-seater Bell Jet Ranger lost height off Charmouth, Dorset.

The official, who cannot be identified, said that Mr Burgess got into difficulties soon after taking off. "He was shouting and did not seem to take in the advice he was being given by controllers."

At one stage Mr Burgess had flown 100ft over a holiday camp at Budleigh Salterton in Devon.

The helicopter had then headed towards Dorset, where it was lost on radar. The official added: "He must have gone below a certain height. We think he was trying to find a pocket in the cloud and fog but was getting more disorientated and panicky."

The Air Accidents Investigation Branch confirmed that it was investigating the incident.

Sweet salesman 'had sticky fingers'

By A CORRESPONDENT

A SALESMAN stole more than a million sweets from his employers, a court was told yesterday.

Sidney Hamilton should have had more than two million penny sweets in his lock-up when managers made a spot check but they found almost half were missing. Exeter Crown Court was told that the 37-year-old sales representative supplemented his commission by selling them and pocketing the money.

Hamilton, of Kingscote, south Devon, denies stealing £11,000 worth of

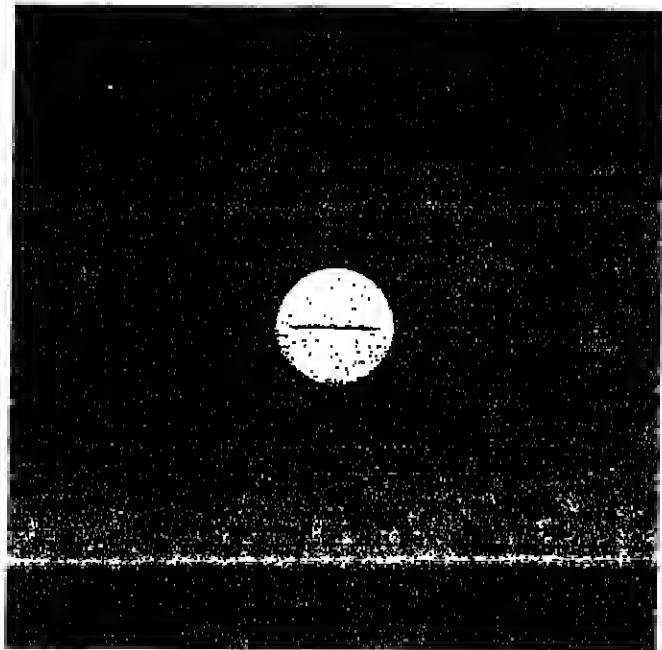
sweets from Wisepenny Ltd over ten months in 1997.

Geoffrey Mercer, for the prosecution, said that Mr Hamilton ordered sweets each week by telephone and they were delivered to his lock-up premises in Newton Abbot. "In October 1997, the regional sales manager carried out a stock check and found the value of stock to be about £11,500. He should have had nearly £23,000," he said that Mr Hamilton must have sold the sweets and kept the money.

The trial continues

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SNP 'hiding plan for vote' Labour policies 'set by London'

Labour accuses nationalists of pursuing Scottish independence by stealth, reports Jason Allardyce

THE CAMPAIGN to win control of Scotland's first parliament in 300 years began yesterday with Labour accusing nationalists of hiding their plans for independence.

Donald Dewar, the Scottish Labour leader, opened his party's election campaign by accusing the Scottish National Party of an "exercise in dishonesty" over its plans for a referendum on independence.

His comments, which infuriated the SNP leadership, were prompted by the nationalists' decision to put their commitment to independence and a referendum within four years at the bottom of a ten-point pledge card. Other low-key issues, including abolishing Private Finance Initiatives and commitments to land reform, featured more prominently.

Addressing a rally in Edinburgh's Parliament Square, Mr Dewar said: "This must be the first time in political history that a separatist party has tried deliberately to conceal its sole purpose for existing."

"I say to the SNP that you can tear up your ten points but what you must do above all is start telling Scotland the truth. If they win on May 6 I believe they will start filing for an expensive and messy divorce from Britain."

Mr Dewar said that the SNP had already made clear that it they would begin negotiations on independence the day after they won the election.

But Alex Salmond, the SNP leader, denied that the party was trying to hide its commitment to independence, which he said still remained at the heart of its campaign strategy.

"If we do win an overall majority, then of course we would ask Westminster for negotiations," he said.

"The decision on independence is a decision made in a referendum. It has to be made in a straight question — it has to be a straight yes or no."

Mr Dewar said that Scots faced a stark choice at the polls between social justice and a divorce from the rest of Britain that would raise taxes and cost jobs.

"What we are seeing now is an attempt at a disordered retreat and an admission that the one reason for their existence is the reason on which they cannot be elected ... They are now a party that will say anything to win," he said.

Mr Dewar also praised the work of Tony Blair and the late Labour leader John Smith, which he said had played a vital role in achieving a Scottish Parliament.

Earlier, the SNP launched its campaign saying that its pledge to forgo the penny tax cut and invest in public services would be the defining issue of the contest, Mr Salmond



Donald Dewar boards Labour's Holyrood "battle bus" in Edinburgh yesterday. He said that independence would cost jobs and necessitate tax increases

said: "The contest between investment in public services and a penny tax bribe is one that the SNP will win decisively."

Mr Salmond said that Scots would judge the issue on their own experience in hospitals, housing schemes and classrooms, and accused Labour of being run by "remote control" from London.

He rejected suggestions that a second-place finish would better suit the party's long-term goals by allowing them to mount effective opposition to a fledgling Labour executive.

"The SNP is trying to win this campaign and win it for Scotland and we have put forward policies that we believe the people of Scotland will rally to in the next four weeks," he said.

Mr Salmond dismissed opinion polls suggesting his party was lagging badly behind Labour, saying "Time will tell in the next four weeks whether I'm right or Gordon Brown is right."

Mr Dewar, who is tomorrow expected to announce the creation of 300 jobs in Glasgow through American investment, later told activists in Bathgate to go all-out to defeat the SNP and independence.

The Liberal Democrats played down speculation about their role as potential power brokers in the Scottish parliament when they launched their campaign with a pledge to double spending on school books and equipment (Gillian Harris writes).

Jim Wallace, the party's Scottish leader, who is expected to form a coalition government with the largest single party at Holyrood, said that his party would enter coalition talks once the votes were counted.

But he repeated his promise that the Lib Dems would not form a coalition with any party advocating a referendum on independence during the first term in office, effectively ruling out partnership with the SNP.

The Liberal Democrats, who have declared their willingness to use the so-called tarran tax to fund increased spending on education, plan to invest an extra £60 million on education in the first year of government, equivalent to £80 per pupil.

While Labour acknowledges that the nationalists are its greatest threat, the party intends to concentrate its campaign on showing voters how the Government has already delivered on key issues such as the minimum wage and boosting child benefits. Labour's assembly manifesto is expected to be published next week. The Liberal Democrats will unveil their proposals today; the Conservatives launch their campaign tomorrow.

Speaking as his candidates gathered at Cardiff Bay, site of the assembly, Mr Wigley said: "We have made up tremendous ground since the general election and have

fully established ourselves as the only credible alternative to Labour in Wales. People, particularly in the industrial valleys, have seen what one-party government can do, and I think they are determined to see that doesn't happen in the assembly."

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Tony Blair is accused of having too tight control of the Scottish Labour Party, to the first of a series of Conservative posters in the election campaign for the Holyrood parliament. The poster, unveiled yesterday, uses a photograph of Westminster and the slogan: "Scottish Labour Policy. Here. Here." The Tories claimed that Labour's policies for the Scottish parliament were dictated by the London party. Raymond Robertson, the chairman of the Scottish Conservatives, said that Labour had talked "endlessly" about devolution for 18 years. He claimed that it was "the supreme irony" that Mr Blair now refused to devolve "so much as a scrap of real power to the Scottish Labour Party".



Building block falls

The Government is expected to pay more than £400,000 for three former council houses that stand in the way of the new Scottish parliament building in Edinburgh. The price has been agreed after almost a year of negotiations with Edinburgh City Council and two private owners who bought the properties under the right-to-buy legislation. One estate agent described the 1950s terraced homes as "unprepossessing and architecturally unfashionable" and worth little more than £50,000. The Scottish Office has refused to confirm the purchase price but said that a deal had been struck and the properties would now be demolished. The council's property services committee is expected to agree to sell one property to the Scottish Office for £117,000. It is understood that the private owners will be offered about £150,000 each.

Scargill misses launch

Arthur Scargill yesterday cancelled his speech to launch the Socialist Labour Party's manifesto for the Scottish Parliament election campaign. Mr Scargill, a founder member, rang party colleagues an hour before he was due to speak in Glasgow to say that he could not attend because he was negotiating a pay rise for National Union of Mineworkers' members employed by RJB Mining. The SLP has pledged to abolish unemployment and double the minimum wage if elected to Holyrood. The party, which expects to win two or three seats, plans to wind down the nuclear industry and develop wave, wind and solar power, as well as lobby Westminster to abolish VAT and raise corporation tax.

Quote of the day

Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary, on the Scottish National Party's ten-point election pledge, which puts independence last:

"This must be the first time in political history that a separatist party has tried deliberately to conceal its sole purpose for existing from the electorate."

AGENDA

Today: The Chancellor Gordon Brown officially launches the Scottish Labour election campaign with Scottish party leader Donald Dewar in the party's new media centre in Glasgow. The Liberal Democrat manifesto is launched in Edinburgh and the SNP leader Alex Salmond will be campaigning on the nationalist battlebus across the west of Scotland.

LINKS

www.scottishdevolution.org.uk
Scottish Office site with general information on Scottish parliament, including its make-up, powers, voting system and building design
www.scotland.org.uk
general directory with information on Scottish politics and parties
www.scotland.gov.uk
general Scottish Office directory

Plaid Cymru on a high

PLAID CYMRU kicked off the campaign for the Welsh assembly elections yesterday, promising "a new beginning for Wales" and claiming its current support is the highest in the party's 75 years.

Dafydd Wigley, MP, the party president, said confidence was high that Labour would be denied an overall majority of the 60 seats in the vote in 30 days. Recent opinion polls have put support for Plaid Cymru at 29 per cent compared with 10 per cent at the general election.

Speaking as his candidates gathered at Cardiff Bay, site of the assembly, Mr Wigley said: "We have made up tremendous ground since the general election and have

fully established ourselves as the only credible alternative to Labour in Wales. People, particularly in the industrial valleys, have seen what one-party government can do, and I think they are determined to see that doesn't happen in the assembly."

While Labour acknowledges that the nationalists are its greatest threat, the party intends to concentrate its campaign on showing voters how the Government has already delivered on key issues such as the minimum wage and boosting child benefits. Labour's assembly manifesto is expected to be published next week. The Liberal Democrats will unveil their proposals today; the Conservatives launch their campaign tomorrow.

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سكدا من الامم

When the telephone is a pain in the neck

By IAN MURRAY
MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

HOW TO RELIEVE THE STRAIN

Headsets remain the most effective of hands-free telephone operations, with more than six million in use worldwide. BT offers three types of headset, priced from £59.99 to £129.99. For £187.94 BT sells an adaptor that converts any modular telephone into a headset and handset working while its £50 Holdaphone allows the normal handset to be attached to a flexible arm.

Another option is the phone rest, a cradle-style attachment that sits on the shoulder and allows the caller to use both hands without contorting the spine. Ericsson and Nortel Networks are among telecoms suppliers researching this simple pain-relieving method.

A study was conducted on 26 staff aged 18 to 57 at offices in London handling legal, financial, secretarial and computer work. It found that 65 per cent had headaches sometimes or frequently when using a telephone handset for more than two hours a day, 50 per cent complained of lower-back pain, Elizabeth Simpson, the report's author, said. "Unlike manual worker safety, the issue of occupational injury among office staff is still not taken seriously enough by employers. This is partly because the injuries caused by bad telephone habits cannot be seen and take time to manifest."

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy said that the condition, which its members called telephitis, could be avoided by using headsets.

Tracy Bury, head of research and development at the society, said neck and back pain caused 1.2 million lost working days a year. "The resulting cost to industry and the NHS is massive but it could be cut dramatically with

more investment in prevention of these common problems," Anthony Hopkins, a neurologist and director of research at the Royal College of Physicians, found that using a phone while driving could bring on a condition he called mobile users' shoulder droop. One of his patients lost the use of his right arm for a month after spending two hours on his mobile phone. A nerve in the neck was damaged by being compressed by the handset.

Doctors at a Paris hospital treated a 36-year-old woman with severe neck pain and ringing in the ear. They found that blood had become trapped in her neck artery while she made a half-hour call on a cordless phone that she wedged under her chin while ironing.

Anyone who combines telephoning with other tasks, including driving, increases neck and shoulder tension by 41 per cent, according to research by the Institute for Treatment and Prevention of Repetitive Motion Injuries at Santa Clara Valley Medical Centre in California.



Hours spent using a telephone while also typing risks causing painful nerve damage

Vegetarians should watch what they drink

By HELEN RUMBELOW

ONLY half of all wines are suitable for vegetarians but this is rarely stated on the bottle, a report by the Consumers' Association says today.

Dried ox blood was traditionally used to clarify wines. Now producers are likely to use gelatine, from beef, or isinglass, from fish, to remove the residue. For vegan wines, manufacturers have to avoid other clarifying agents such as egg white. Instead they use clay or leave the wine unfiltered.

Widespread confusion over labelling among producers and drinkers, means that organic wines and those suitable for vegetarians and vegans often fail to make this clear.

"France is the biggest producer of organic wines but that is because they are largely small family-run concerns that have always made wine in a traditional way, without pesticides. It often takes someone else to come along and notice that they are organic," Susy Atkins, Editor of Which? Wine Guide and author of the report in Health Which?, said.

Nerve centres damaged by a twisted spine



TWISTING the neck in order to hold a telephone without hands puts pressure on the spine, contorts it and will expose any nerve root vulnerability caused by disc problems.

The point at risk from a badly clasped telephone is that at which the neck and shoulder meet the "salt cellar" dips above the collar bone. Here, nerves emerge from the neck vertebrae to form the brachial plexus, which supplies nerves to the arm, neck and upper part of the thorax.

Nerve roots can be impaired by pressure, which is commonly the result of an injury to the intervertebral discs. Nerve root damage can result in pain, loss of sensation or loss of muscle power in the area supplied by the nerve roots.

Another possible explanation for nerve damage following a telephone neck injury is that it may be caused by prolonged pressure on a nerve that is pressed between the plastic of the handset and the bone and hard tissue of the neck. This type of injury is more commonly observed when someone has been sleeping deeply and a comparative-

ly superficial nerve has been caught between a bony part of the body — such as a shoulder, elbow or knee — and a chair or bedhead. A drunken person who falls asleep with their arm over the back of a chair, can damage the radial nerve in the upper arm.

Neck problems related to telephone use have been described before, but discomfort in the lower back brought on by leaning forward while using a telephone is a new observation by the Surrey researchers. This pain is similar to that induced in men who have lumbar disc troubles when they stoop forward to peer at themselves in a shaving mirror.

Pain may be eased if the chair and telephone are placed so it is not necessary to lean forward. The ideal solution would be to correct faulty posture by learning the Alexander technique or Pilates exercises.

Once the damage is done, however, patients may have to wear a neck support. Persistent pressure on a nerve root or compression of the cord could also necessitate surgery.

DR THOMAS STUTTFORD

Scientist plugs his TV into the bath

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A BATHFUL of hot water will generate enough electricity to run a television for about two hours, a professor at Cardiff University has proved.

Michael Rowe said: "Instead of letting waste water run down the plughole, you can take the heat out of it and create electricity."

Professor Rowe, who used a 19th-century invention, the thermocouple, to turn the heat into power, believes there is a

big future in generating electricity from waste heat.

A thermocouple is a simple device: two wires of different metals joined at their ends to form a loop. When one junction is hot and the other cold, electricity flows around the loop. In a central heating system, for example, a thermocouple placed between hot and cold water pipes will generate enough electricity to drive the pump.

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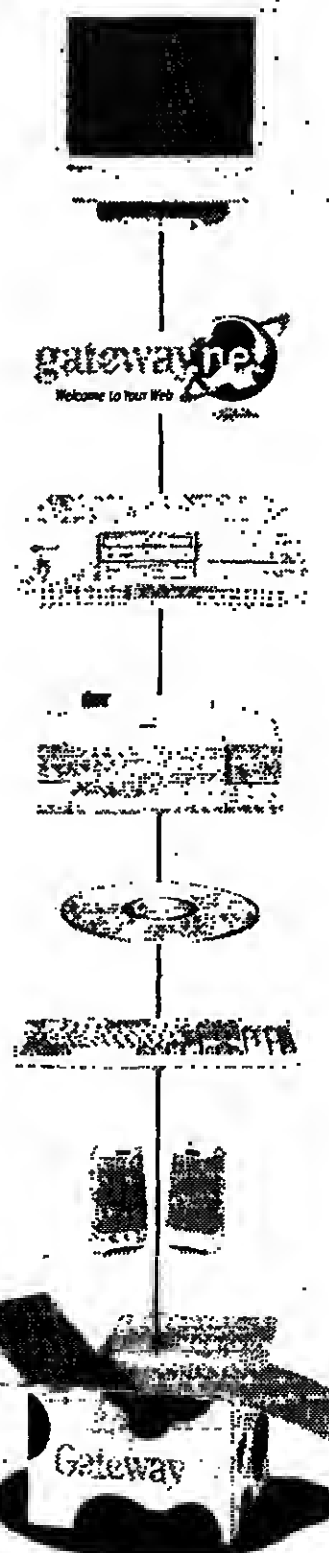
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Nannies 'must agree not to hit'

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN
SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

PARENTS should employ people to look after their children only if they agree not to smack them, the Government advised yesterday.

In a 20-page booklet, *Need A Nanny?*, it says it is important for parents to discuss "positive discipline strategies" with prospective nannies. "A trained childcare worker would never use physical punishment as a form of discipline," it adds.

Campaigners for anti-smacking laws said yesterday that if profession-

al childcarers, acting in place of parents, were not allowed to smack, then parents should also be banned from doing so. Alan Coombe, from the Barnardo's charity, said: "Physical violence against children is never acceptable, whether administered by a nanny or a parent."

Margaret Hodge, junior Education and Employment Minister, who oversees policy on childcare, said that the Government was not trying to preach to parents about what to do in their own home, but most parents would not find it acceptable for their nanny to smack their children. "Peo-

ple who do a childcare course will be trained to use strategies other than smacking," she said.

The Department of Health has promised to curb the right of parents to hit their children with an implement, such as a cane, but has stopped short of outlawing smacking. After a ruling in the European Court last autumn that British law on corporal punishment failed to protect children's rights, it is drawing up a consultation document on what kind of smacking should be allowed.

Yesterday's guidelines on hiring nannies come two months after Lou-

ise Sullivan, the Australian nanny, was convicted at the Old Bailey of killing a six-month old baby in her care by shaking her.

The booklet informs parents that they will soon be able to use the new Criminal Records Bureau to vet potential employees. The bureau, which should become operational early next year, will list people deemed to be unsuitable to work with children.

Need A Nanny?, which will be distributed free in doctors' surgeries, libraries and supermarkets, advises parents to check any unexplained gaps in an applicant's work experi-

ence and to check all references with previous employers and teachers over the telephone or in person. Employers are also advised to choose nannies with qualifications from recognised childcare organisations.

Officials are also drawing up a code of conduct for nanny agencies, and those that sign up to it will get a government seal of approval.

Need A Nanny? can be obtained free of charge by telephoning 0845 6022260 or e-mailing dfee@prologistics.co.uk. It will shortly be available on the Internet at www.dfee.gov.uk/nanny/index.htm.

Teachers call for bar on unruly pupils

BY A CORRESPONDENT

A TEACHER told yesterday how a four-year-old boy was excluded in his first week at school after biting 16 children and four teachers.

Dave Battye said he was called in to a South Yorkshire school as a teachers' union representative just two days after the boy's arrival.

He told delegates at the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers' conference in Eastbourne that the boy was unteachable, and joined calls for disruptive children to be kept out of mainstream schools.

The union criticised the spread of special units within schools designed to deal with disruptive pupils. The Government is planning more of the units as part of its strategy to reduce the soaring level of school exclusions.

Mr Battye, a member of the union executive, told the conference that teachers should not be expected to teach children who did not want to learn.

"This is not an educational problem. We deal with educational problems. This little boy at four going round biting members of the public at random was not an educational problem. His mouth watered when he saw dinner ladies."

The boy bit seven pupils and two members of staff on his first day. He bit nine pupils, the head teacher and the depu-

ty head on his second day, before being excluded.

Mr Battye rejected the view of educationists who blamed bad behaviour on difficulties children had in coping with their school work.

Delegates backed a motion condemning the "chaotic agenda of pupils who respond neither to authority nor to ambition". They said units for disruptive children, "sin bins", should not be used as an alternative to permanent exclusion.

Delegates also criticised plans to set targets for cutting the number of exclusions.

Jim Prior, a delegate from North Lanarkshire, called for legislation to make parents more responsible for children's behaviour. "The time for nanny-pamper education theories is over," he said.

England's three main classroom unions should hold a joint ballot to convince ministers of the strength of opposition to plans for performance-related pay, Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said yesterday.

In his closing address to the NUT's conference in Brighton, he said that the Government's decision to make the new teacher appraisals voluntary in their first year was not sufficient to head off the union's campaign of industrial action.

Leading article, page 19



The Grade II listed station at Mytholmroyd, the village where Hughes was born, which could be converted as a tribute

Railtrack delays Hughes project

BY PAUL WILKINSON, NORTH EAST CORRESPONDENT



Hughes: never lost his Yorkshire accent

A NEAR-DERELICT railway building has been suggested as a heritage centre dedicated to the life and works of Ted Hughes, the late Poet Laureate.

However, Railtrack, which owns the Victorian Grade II listed building in the Pennine village of Mytholmroyd in West Yorkshire, where Hughes was born, has been accused of dragging its feet over the plan. It says it is looking at other offers.

The idea was put forward

by Royd Regeneration, a local development group, which wants to convert the building to establish a library of Hughes's work and an archive of material related to him, together with study rooms, an exhibition hall and a lecture theatre.

Although he lived in America and the West Country, Hughes never lost his Yorkshire burr, and now locals want to pay tribute to their most famous son. The centre has the support of Hughes's widow, Carol, and his publishers, Faber and Faber.

Sean Green, the project leader with Royd Regeneration, said that once the family's approval had been secured, others fell in line. "The Poetry Society, Yorkshire and Humberside Arts and Calderdale Council are all involved now."

Railtrack's three-storey stone building has been unoccupied for 15 years. Officially described as a stair tower, it is set into an embankment on the line between Leeds and

Manchester. It links the platform built high on a viaduct over a tributary of the River Calder, which is also Grade II listed, with the valley floor. A modern flight of steps allows travellers access to the unmanned station.

Mr Green said: "Bearing in mind the enthusiasm and excitement this project has generated, we would appreciate it if Railtrack would be more communicative and co-operative with us."

A spokeswoman for Railtrack said yesterday: "We inherited a great deal of property from British Rail when it was privatised, and we have been working through it all to consider how best to maximise our assets."

"This building was not at the top of our priority list as the station has been unmanned for some time. We are getting round to looking at it and there are a number of interested parties. We will have to consider them on a commercial basis."

Weight of the law bans diet advert

BY CHRISTINE MIDDAP

THE full weight of the law turned against the Yummy Yum Diet yesterday. The Office of Fair Trading won a High Court injunction to stop slimming advertisements that had claimed that certain foods could burn fat or cleanse the body of impurities.

John Bridgeman, the Director-General of Fair Trading, said: "Advertisements that offer false hope and prey on the vulnerabilities of people are particularly offensive."

The injunction against Top 20 Ltd of Regent Street, London, stops the company making certain claims in its advertisements for the Yummy Yum Diet. It had claimed that the diet would allow users to lose specified amounts of weight in specified times and that it was effective in cleaning the body of impurities. It also promised increased energy and reduced risk of serious illness and said that certain foods burn fat from the body.

The diet was advertised through unsolicited faxes that invited recipients to dial a premium-rate fax number to receive a diet sheet two to four pages long. The cost was £1 per minute and it took four to nine minutes to receive.

"This is not the first time that I have been forced to go to court to stop misleading slimming ads," Mr Bridgeman said. "I warn anyone who continues to produce such advertisements and ignores rulings from the Advertising Standards Authority they should expect to hear from my office."

WORLD IN BRIEF

Churches closed in protest at violence

Nazareth: Churches were closed for 48 hours yesterday in an unprecedented protest against attacks on Christians by Muslims (Christopher Walker writes). The violence in the town, which is home to 42,000 Muslims and 18,000 Christians, is the most serious in the Holy Land for many years and could wreck plans to make it a centre of millennium celebrations. Riot police patrolled the streets and vigilantes guarded churches as Christian leaders, who ordered the closures, called on the Israeli Government to take steps to halt the violence, which began over rival plans for land close to the Basilica of the Annunciation.

Iraqis executed

Baghdad: Four Iraqis, including three clergymen, have been hanged for the murder of the country's Shia Muslim leader and two of his sons, an official statement said yesterday. The men were shown on state television last month confessing to shooting Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Sadiq al-Sader and his sons in February, but exiled opposition groups said one of them had been in jail since 1991. (AP)

Call for guerrilla war

Jakarta: Xanana Gusmao, the East Timorese independence leader, has called for a resumption of the guerrilla war against Indonesian forces in the occupied territory (Patricia Numan writes). Gusmao's lawyer said that he would withdraw the call to arms if a UN contingent was deployed to stop attacks by pro-Indonesian militias that have killed scores of civilians in recent months.

Forgers' \$1m a week

Calif: A gang of Colombian forgers who are said to have made more than \$1 million (£620,000) a week by bleaching 10 Bolivian notes, worth 10p, and reprinting them as near-perfect US\$10 bills have been arrested by police after a tip-off (Gabriella Gammis writes). Much of the money was used to launder drug profits. The US Treasury Department said that the fakes had been entering America for three years.

Magician buried alive

New York: David Blaine, a 25-year-old magician, was buried alive in a see-through coffin where he has vowed to remain for a week as a test of his will. He has prepared for the stunt by learning to put himself into a trance-like state and spending four days a week in a coffin in his living room. Blaine will have no food and three to four table-spoons of water a day. Fresh air will be pumped in. (AP)

Velázquez grave found

Madrid: Historians say they have located the remains of the painter Velázquez under a Madrid street. If confirmed, the bones will be moved to a more suitable site to mark the 400th anniversary of his birth this year. His crypt was originally under a church that was demolished when Napoleonic forces invaded Spain. Previous attempts to find the site, in 1845 and 1960, failed because of faulty maps. (AP)

Tycoon faces arrest

Moscow: A warrant has been issued for the arrest of Boris Berezovsky, the tycoon who helped to finance President Yeltsin's re-election in 1996, on charges of money laundering and illegal entrepreneurship. Mr Berezovsky is accused with Nikolai Glushkov, Aeroflot's former deputy director, of siphoning off billions of dollars from the airline's profits. Mr Berezovsky, who is in France, denied he would seek asylum.

Crime boss pleads guilty

New York: John Gotti Jr, head of America's largest crime family, entered a surprise guilty plea on the eve of his trial on racketeering charges (James Bone writes). Gotti Jr faces a maximum sentence of seven years. Prosecutors said his guilty plea meant the death knell for the Gotti 15-year rule over the once-feared New York crime family. Gotti's father, the former head of the clan, is serving a life sentence.

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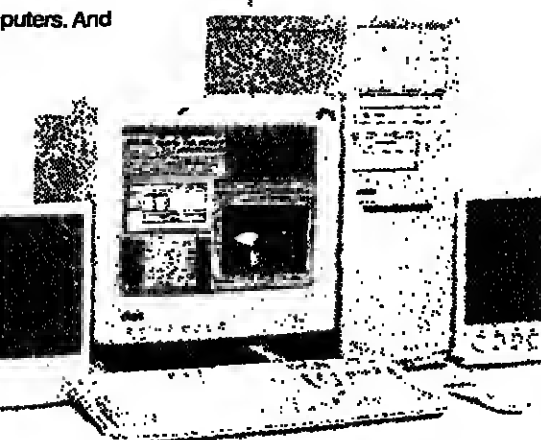
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حركة من الاصل

Man's debt to spuds

IT IS hard to imagine cookery without the potato. The humble tuber makes so many appearances in so many different forms that Western cuisine would be a poor thing without it. But now an American anthropologist has gone even further.

Cooking tubers, he suggests, was a key event in human evolution, enabling the huge expansion of the brain that led to *Homo erectus*, the human species which first left Africa to colonise the world.

Many explanations have been advanced to explain this dramatic change 1.8 million years ago, with meat-eating a current favourite. But Dr Richard Wrangham, of Harvard University, says that cooked tubers are an even better bet. He points out in *Current Anthropology* that the Australopithecines, man's ancestors, were eating meat a million years earlier without evolving big brains or larger bodies. Many omnivores alive today have a meat diet, but it has yet to produce any four-legged Einsteins.

So why tubers? They are certainly plentiful in Africa, even if the potato we eat is of South American origin, and suited to a temperate climate. Cassava, yams and sweet potatoes are staples in the Tropics. In Tanzania's savannah grasslands today, there are 40 tonnes of tuber per square kilometre, and no reason to believe things were very different two million years ago, when tuber-eating pigs and mole rats flourished.

Tubers only really show their value when cooked, however. Then the carbohydrates are made palatable and provide a lot of



SCIENCE BRIEFING

Nigel Hawkes

calories. Dr Wrangham calculates, reports *Science*, that a diet of 60 per cent cooked tubers and no meat boosts calorie intake by more than 40 per cent over a diet of nuts, berries and raw tubers. A 60 per cent meat diet, by contrast, offers only a 20 per cent calorie boost. An energy-rich diet would allow the teeth, jaws and gut to shrink, and the brain to grow — just what happened in the decisive step to man.

The idea of our ancestors eating roots is also more plausible than a meat diet, he believes. Modern hunter-gatherers such as the Hadza of Tanzania may go weeks without a kill, even though they hunt with bows and arrows, technology more advanced than early man.

There is only one flaw with the theory, and it is a fairly big one. There is no evidence of cooking hearths going back further than about 250,000 years, so how did the first human beings cook their tubers? He speculates that they discovered the taste when tubers were accidentally baked in a grass fire triggered by lightning. But there is little evidence of the systematic use of fire, such as would be expected if baked roots became the *nouvelle cuisine* of the day.

The theory nevertheless has supporters, including anthropologists from the University of Utah in Salt Lake City who argue that fires for cooking tubers might have been ephemeral, leaving few traces. Dr Wrangham admits that more evidence is needed. "There hasn't been enough satisfactory archaeology for people to get their teeth into," he says, suiting the metaphor to the subject.

Enzyme ends the run on reds



PUTTING a bright red sock into a white wash and coming up with everything a sickly pink could soon be just a nasty memory. Scientists from Novo Nordisk Biotech in Davis, California, have developed a tough enzyme that can prevent dye released from one garment attaching itself to another.

They knew that peroxidases could do the job by chewing up dyes in solution, but ordinary ones cannot survive the heat, alkalinity or the hydrogen peroxide concentrations inside a washing machine. They set out to make a better peroxidase by starting with the version made by the ink-cap mushroom, and introducing random changes, both in the amino acid sequence of the enzyme, and into its gene, to create enzymes more resistant to destruction in the wash. They selected the ten most promising, and put their genes into yeast cells. Yeast has the ability to mix and match genes, so this produced thousands of mutant combinations.

Further selection and mutation produced a peroxidase 174 times more stable in hot water and 100 times more resistant to hydrogen peroxide than the original. The team reports in *Nature Biotechnology*. It prevented dyes from a red cloth running into a white one.

Winds of change benefit nightjars



THE winds that demolished the woods of southern England in October 1987 blew in some good for the nightjar, a species that in the early 1980s looked set for extinction in Britain. The 1981 count by the British Trust for Ornithology put the total at no more than 2,100 pairs. But by 1992, to general surprise, the numbers had increased to 3,400.

In *Biologist*, the journal of the Institute of Biology, Mike Everett, of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, attributes the turnaround to changes in forestry practice and the great storm of October 1987. Nightjars are heathland birds, but they have turned to clearings in forests as an alternative niche since heath has declined.

In 1981, commercially planted conifers began to be harvested for the first time on a big scale, and nightjars found the areas of cleared forest to their liking. The great storm was even better news, and it was followed by a second gale in January 1990. These brought down so many trees that the nightjars were able to use the glades and clearings provided to multiply. That this was the cause of the recovery was shown by deliberate felling at the RSPB's Minsmere reserve, which had similar effects.



Some autistics, such as the character played by Dustin Hoffman in the film *Rain Man*, are often highly intelligent but are regarded as socially odd

The autistic mind

Scientists are using imaging equipment to gain an insight into how the brains of autistic children function. Anjana Ahuja reports

Until the Sixties, it was almost an offence to be autistic. Children were institutionalised and, for many years, parents shouldered the erroneous belief that the condition was the consequence of "refrigerator" parenting. Emotional coldness from mothers in particular, psychologists asserted, could explain why their children grew up aloof, unaffectionate and adrift in the world of social relationships.

Once psychologists started peering into the minds of those with autism, however, medical thinking was transformed. Autism, which affects about

one child in 5,000, is now thought to be a mild form of brain damage. Now that scientists can look inside the brain to see how it functions, with the help of imaging equipment, the remarkable world inhabited by those with autism is being explored.

Foremost among the navigators is Dr Francesca Happé, senior cognitive psychologist at the Institute of Psychiatry in London. Dr Happé, 31, who will deliver the third lecture in the *Scientists for the New Century* series, sponsored by *The Times* and The Royal Institution, prefers to think of autism as a form of "mind-blindness". It is a deficit in the ability to mind-read, which most of us employ subconsciously in everyday life. It allows us to work out why people behave in the way that they do.

"For example, take a Smarties tube which contains pencils instead of Smarties," Dr Happé says. "Most children would guess the tube contained Smarties rather than pencils. An autistic child, however, would think that other children would guess pencils. Because they know the tube contains pencils, they assume other children will automatically know, too."

This inability to guess what other people are thinking quickly becomes apparent in children. An autistic toddler will not respond to facial expressions. In extreme cases, there will be no speech or gesture. If there is language it is functional: when autistic children say "apple", it is their way of requesting one. They do not speak of their experiences, but they might act like a human tape recorder, repeating what other people say.

To them, language is literal, so they are unable to tell lies, understand jokes, cartoons or figures of speech. The child remains anchored in the physical world, preferring to play with real objects. Most fascinating, perhaps, are children at the so-called high-functioning end of the spectrum — they exhibit mild forms of autism such as Asperger's syndrome. It is these individuals, who are often highly intelligent but are regarded as socially odd, that Dr Happé chose to concentrate on for her post-doctoral research at the Medical Research Council Cognitive Development Unit, University College London.

She says: "High-functioning autistics are the kind of people, often men, who memorise the Latin names of every type of carrot and are captivated by train timetables, but are left cold by gossip or *EastEnders*. They want friends, but everything they do is socially wrong." The fact that they are normal, except for social abili-

ties, suggests that the capacity to empathise with others is housed in a particular area of the brain. This is reinforced by the finding that some patients with brain injuries in the right hemisphere display the symptoms of autism.

"However, we know that high-functioning autistic children often acquire a glimmer of awareness of what other people are thinking," says Dr Happé. "We found out by accident because parents would tell us that their child had managed to keep a secret or tell a small lie. To do these things, you need to be able to put yourself in someone else's shoes. It led to the idea that people could make their way up the spectrum into the world of mind-reading."

Did this mean that autistic people could suddenly acquire a natural ability to read minds? Indeed, when presented with scenarios such as the Smarties problem, a few individuals, particularly those competent at language, could perform well. However, not all their social problems disappeared. Dr Happé discovered that

even though high-functioning autistics could pass the Smarties test, they would fall down at more sophisticated scenarios. "One story involved a conversation between someone who wanted to buy a kitten and a cat-lover selling them," she says. "When the buyer hesitated, the seller said 'If no one buys them, I'll drown them'. The participants generally knew the seller wouldn't drown the kittens, but didn't know why. They couldn't see that it was a ruse to get a sale." Her research has had practical, as well as academic, impact. Similar tests are used to assess autism in children and she has written a handbook on the subject.

By scanning the brains of autistics and non-autistics while they studied stories, she discovered that the groups process the information using slightly different parts of the brain. So even though they appear to read social signals, they read them in a different way.

"Rather than certain circuits

autistic children to see how their brains deal with mind-reading as they grow up.

Dr Happé thinks that as we come to know more about the disorder, people with autism will be appreciated for what they can, rather than what they cannot, do. "They are good at looking at details. They often have exceptional memories, and are predictable and logical, which makes them adept at interacting with computers. In fact, the coming century is going to be a good time for people with autism."

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THE TIMES

SCIENTISTS FOR THE NEW CENTURY

Why do some people find cartoons and soap operas as challenging as mental arithmetic? On Wednesday April 28, in *How the Brain Reads the Mind*, Dr Francesca Happé from the Institute of Psychiatry will discuss how autism has come to be regarded as a form of "mind-blindness." She will also show how our brains allow us to guess what others are thinking.

The lecture will be chaired by Professor Susan Greenfield, Director of The Royal Institution. Members of the audience will also be able to ask questions.

The lecture will be held at 7.30pm at The Royal Institution of Great Britain, 21 Albemarle Street, London W1X 4BS.

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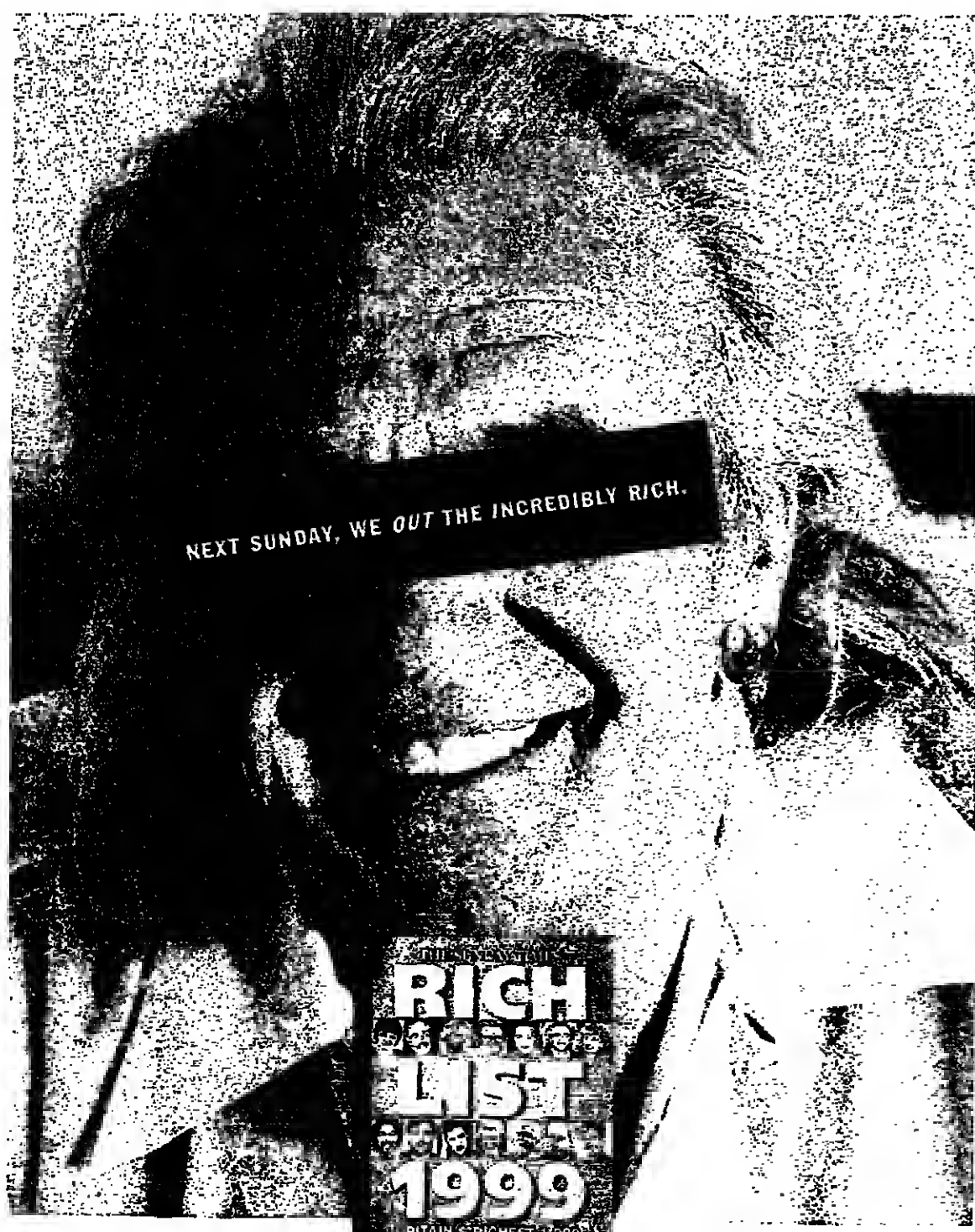
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THE SUNDAY TIMES



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سكينة من الاصل

Major booty at the Manhattan baby shower

Sunday: "Hi, presents go in the corner," orders Betsy, our hostess, leading us through to her crowded Madison Avenue sitting room and pointing to a Himalayan-like pile of boxes where the contemporary icons of serious consumerism are well represented. I spot the distinctive turquoise of Tiffany's, several grey boxes from Saks, a couple of black and silver Barneys bags and the blue and purple logo of Fifth Avenue's smartest department store, Bergdorf Goodman.

"Wow, that's some major booty going on," observes a rangy, blonde editor in a black Ralph Lauren pantsuit, who pours me a glass of cranberry juice. I place my own offering at the bottom of the teetering mountain, for what is becoming a regular feature of my Sunday afternoons: The Manhattan Baby Shower.

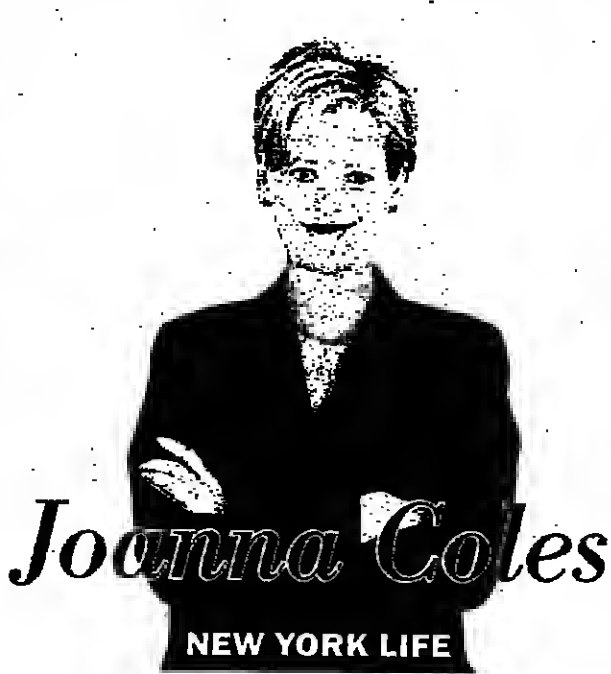
In London, my pregnant friends were far too superstitious to want presents before the baby was born. With typical British gloom, they felt that asking for Bunykins mugs or a set of Beatrix Potter

would be tempting fate. But Americans embrace the future differently. And among Manhattan's professional women the baby shower, once mocked as a relic of the home-maker Fifties, is now back as a serious social event.

Today's crowd consists mainly of thirtysomething writers, executives and shrinks, and even though it's Sunday we are all dressed alike — in the black-suited uniform of the working woman. "This is like a really great book launch, except there are no men," says Dani, this afternoon's guest of honour, who is a writer and university teacher. As is the convention, her baby is due in a month's time. Her husband has gone drinking with his father and will make his appearance, to thank us for showering his wife with gifts, at precisely 5pm.

Nodding to the working week, the contemporary shower is hosted by a friend — on Sundays between 3pm and 5pm prompt — and follows a strict pattern.

For the first half-hour



Joanna Coles
NEW YORK LIFE

guests are expected to mingle, sipping tea and nibbling cookies. This afternoon's fare, prepared by the host's husband (the only man allowed on the premises and still labouring in the kitchen) is a delicious as-

sortment of female finger food. Amid jugs of exploding red tulips there are platters of cucumber slices layered with Gruyère and tomato, endive boats loaded with Roquefort, thin ovals of salami and deli-

cate slivers of lemon and poppyseed cake.

"Attention girls, it's time for the gift-opening," calls Betsy, clapping her hands over the gossip hubbub as we lay down our plates and take up our places in an obedient circle around the guest of honour. As is customary, one guest is appointed to select the order of gifts while another, armed with pen and paper, keeps track of who gave what. A formal thank-you note is expected.

First up is a black and yellow box tied with a big yellow ribbon. Dani undoes the parcel, sifting through the layers of tissue paper until she pulls out a tiny black jacket and matching black trousers. She holds it up and the entire room of women, tough TV producers, ad executives and investigative reporters, burst out in unison: "Aaahhh!"

"It's beautiful," exclaims Dani, placing the suit back in the box and handing it round for each of us to inspect. The next gift is a Harrods teddy bear from London which she holds aloft. "Aaahhh!" we all

chorus again — each gift must be accorded the same level of attention so as not to offend the giver. For the next hour, we sit alternately cooing and aching as gift after gift is unwrapped and held up for our approval. Musical mobiles, a baby gym, cuddly toys, a silver rattle, two miniature denim jackets, baby cosmetics and dozens of brightly coloured onesies are piled on top of each other.

But behind the Manhattan baby shower there can be serious social tension because it straddles that major New York source of female angst — singlehood. Much more than wedding, the baby shower here marks the graduation of a woman from the collegiate sorority of girlfriends into the world of motherhood. And it is sometimes tinged with the wistfulness of a farewell party. For the unspoken realisation

is that the intensity of childless friendships will probably be lost for ever.

It is particularly tricky for those who do not breed — a very substantial tribe of Manhattan females. I know, from having waited relatively late

The infant is deified and parents are the high priests

before having my own baby shower, just how irritating new mothers can be. And how biology conspires to shrink their conversational horizons as their cerebral lens zooms right in to the close-up of their very own representative of the next generation.

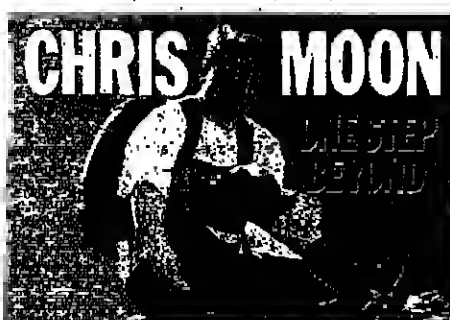
In an environment like Manhattan, where childlessness is common and where even those who do breed tend to do so very frugally, the baby shower marks the induction of the guest of honour into a new cult — the deification of the infant. I'm sure this exaggerated respect and solicitude of small

children exists in most societies where small families have become the norm.

It is probably a function of rarity, in the same way that the elderly are venerated in the Third World where so few survive into old age. But Manhattan is the high temple of kiddie tyranny and the high priests and priestesses are the baby-boomers, the first generation to be brought up within the twin comforting arms of disposable income and consumer choice. It's no coincidence that juvenile designer labels have mushroomed recently, that suddenly it seems that even expensive restaurants have high tables here, that there are dozens of competing models of People Movers or Family Wagons, some of them now equipped with built-in TVs and videos for the passengers as standard.

Feature-length cartoons are attracting unprecedented budgets and revenues as *A Bug's Life* competes with *Ani* and *Toy Story*. All in all it's a great time to be having a kid in New York. It's an even better time to be one.

He points a rocket at my chest, finger on the trigger



In the second extract from his book, Chris Moon tells how he was kidnapped by the Khmer Rouge in the jungles of Cambodia

June 1993: I jerk the steering wheel to the right to take the Land Rover round the edge of a large tree root. With metal detectors, first-aid kit, demolition equipment and six deminers on board, it's a full load. Mr Houn, the interpreter, is sitting next to me in the passenger seat. The truck following us is being driven by Sok. There are about 20 women and children in the rear.

I glance at my watch. It is nearly 11.00pm and we are approaching a large clearing. "Stop! Khmer Rouge!" shouts Mr Houn. For a moment I wonder if he is joking, but I have never heard him shout before. "Where?"

"In front," Mr Houn points. He's not wrong. I feel sweat prickle on my face and the backs of my hands tingle. There are at least 20 of them along the tree line. I can hear my heart beating faster.

There is no way we can drive through. There are too many of them and they are too heavily armed. If we try to reverse and they start firing, there will be a massacre.

They are running towards us, waving their weapons. I hope to God nobody starts shooting. Now I can see soldiers behind, too. We are surrounded. What should I do?

There isn't much choice. I must try to convince them that we are friendly and neutral. The worst thing would be to behave like a victim. I have to find the commander.

Two soldiers jog past me towards the truck, waving AK47s. They are shouting and gesticulating. In front of me, a Khmer Rouge soldier is moving forward. He is wearing the same uniform as the others but is carrying a pistol. This must be the commander. I walk towards him slowly.

As I get closer, he looks perplexed. I smile, put my hands together and bow. I hold out my hand and say hello in my polite Khmer, "Soo-a s'day." "Soo-a s'day," he shakes his hand and smiles the smile of a man who has been waiting for days to ambush somebody and has finally succeeded. He heads straight to the Land Rover with two soldiers and begins to search it. Thank God we have no weapons.

A soldier is running towards me, carrying a gun with a rifle-propelled grenade. He stops three feet away and points the rocket at my chest. His finger is on the trigger. He has wide, glazed eyes and as he shouts, his nostrils flare like the snout of a pig. Still, I

must try to be sociable. I hold out my hand. "Soo-a s'day." Pig Face responds by bringing the rocket very close to my face. Time to take a step back. I bow humbly but keep my eyes on him. He motions with his rifle. I can see Mr Houn by the Land Rover, his face is a mask and he speaks quietly. "We must go over there or Khmer Rouge will kill us."

We walk to the edge of the clearing, where we are made to stand in a semicircle. The soldiers start to shout. "What are they saying, Mr Houn?" "We must walk backwards to bushes and stand still." We tip toe backwards.

"Chop! Chop!" The soldiers shout at us to stop. Mr Houn looks worried. "They say we must take off clothes." Slowly I undo the leather belt around my waist and place it and my Leatherman pouch on the ground. I know they will try to steal my watch, so I hide it in my fist.

I turn to Mr Houn: he looks worried. Fifteen years ago, members of his family were executed in front of him.

I turn away from Pig Face and start to undress. I slip my watch inside my boiler suit and down my boxer shorts.

There is silence, then one of the Khmer Rouge shouts and the soldiers bend us back into a horseshoe of dense thorn bush. There is no escape. There never has been.

Houn is tense. Finally he says: "They say you can put clothes on."

I retrieve my watch, get dressed again, return to the Land Rover and slide into the driving seat. I hear the heavy splutter of the truck to my rear. Sok is driving with a soldier next to him. I understand the command. "We go."

As we move off, the soldiers start to walk away while the village people stand looking shocked. At least they are safe. I drive slowly. There is a flash and thunder. Raindrops fall like giant tears and my nos-

trils fill with the smell of soil and fresh rain. The windscreen is steaming up. I must keep trying. "Please tell him my name is Chris and I am British. What is his name?" Silence. Houn pauses, then says, "Mr Red."

"I have never seen rain this heavy," Houn's expression tells me that conversation is a risk he would prefer not to take. But we have to try. I watch Mr Red. He looks at me before speaking. "It rains more in the forest and its cooler," Houn looks surprised.

"There are many people who will worry about us. Can I tell them that we are OK?" After translation, the response is uncompromising. "Sorry, not possible. My boss not allow."

Up ahead there is a clearing, Huts with sides and roofs of brown thatch are dotted among small fields. I park by a pagoda. On my right, three soldiers are squatting in the shade. They wave me forward and start walking. I march a pace behind the one in front. Behind me, Houn stares through the windscreen.

Automatic weapon fire echoes around the clearing

There are about 20 huts and a building that looks like a wash-room. One side of it is open, and there is a table and two chairs. A soldier motions me to the chair nearest the wall, the others walk away.

I have heard stories. They hang people by their hands and beat them with rods, rope or bamboo. They tie them in the hot sun. In the wet season there is water torture. Scorpions are held with pliers and played slowly over the body to make the victim beg to be smashed in the head with a hoe, or shot. It is 4.40pm.

The commander smiles, shakes hands and before sitting down, says awkwardly: "I would like to help you." He speaks slowly as he consults a Thai/English phrase book. "What country are you from?" "United Kingdom."

"Why you come Cambodia?" I tell him. "To help the

people by clearing mines." Communication is slow but I have no margin for error. "Why you come my area?" I try not to sound angry. "Soldiers make us." He laughs. He knows we were kidnapped.

After nearly half an hour, two soldiers bring in Houn. The commander gestures to the chair next to me, and Houn sits. "Before they not trust me. Now he say they will use me as interpreter."

"The people call him Mr. Clever because he went to primary school. He will try to help us."

Suddenly I strain my ears and scan the horizon. I can hear a helicopter. Soldiers start running everywhere. I must reassure Mr Clever. I say "Daiy panyaha. No problem. UNTAC helicopter."

Without warning, the deafening sound of automatic weapons erupts around the clearing and shatters my hopes. It was going so well.

Mr Clever and I exchange glances, then he looks at the commander. The commander did not give the order to fire. All my fears are justified. The lowest common denominator rule in this place of darkness. The helicopter heads away.

Mr Clever looks at me through narrowed eyes. Houn speaks with the resignation of the condemned man. "Now helicopter come, he cannot guarantee our security."

Then, behind Mr Clever, I see a little man running across the clearing. He is clutching a piece of paper, which Mr Clever takes, reads — and then smiles. Mr Houn explains: "It tell him we are neutral, what you tell him already." The helicopter was only dropping leaflets. But now, will Mr Clever let us go.....?

As we approach the town, people run over to us, waving and saying hello. Men come up and shake our hands. Children start to follow us and women hold up their little ones to wave.

Houn says: "They think Khmer Rouge kill us. They happy we alive and thank us for clearing the mines."

Just for a moment, we are all happy. I nod my head and turn away. I don't want him to see that I am crying.

Extracted from *One Step Beyond* by Chris Moon, published by Macmillan, £16.99. Times readers can buy it for £14.99 by calling The Times Bookshop, 0990-134-459.



Chris Moon (left) is debriefed by a United Nations officer immediately after being released by the Khmer Rouge. Only quick thinking saved his life

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Macedonia deserves Short shrift

The West has another Balkan mess to fix, says James Pettifer

Clare Short may not be everyone's idea of a natural Cabinet minister. But she has a wonderful ability to disregard conventional wisdom, hit nails on the head and reflect basic British decency and common sense. On Monday, in the chaos of the Bosnian refugee camp, she touched a raw nerve. Her response to the humanitarian crisis was more than an alarm call to the West. It raised deep issues about the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, currently home to Nato's nascent ground force, and highlighted the need for a rough Western policy not just towards Serbia but also in our dealings with the Skopje Government.

Macedonia has been oppressing minorities for most of its life. Ever since it became independent from Belgrade in 1991, Macedonia has been rampantly anti-Albanian and discriminated against the massive minority populations of Muslims, pro-Bulgarian Slav-speakers, ethnic Turks and Gypsies.

But the West has fêted Skopje's ruler, President Gligorov, as a moderate. Its support for his attempts to achieve "stability" have acted as a quiet way of helping Serbia. In an unstable region, the apparent civic peace in Macedonia has looked to be a rare Balkan success story.

But there has been a high price to pay in civil liberties and human rights. Massive economic support has been provided by the IMF, but there has been no payback in democratisation of the Titoist political system. Although the situation had improved by last autumn, the 1994 Macedonian election was one of the most corrupt foreign observers had ever seen. Real political power, in any case, rests with the pro-Serb, Communist-dominated Ministry of the Interior.

The original state and its borders were a child of Stalinism, the communist "solution" to the Macedonian question that bedevilled the late Ottoman Empire. Under Tito, the socialist republic of Macedonia was a garden suburb of Serbia, used for cheap holidays, wine and food, the bottom of the Yugoslav heap in every way. A pro-Belgrade Skopje elite was built up, a motley collection of hardline Communists who were really Serbs thinly disguised as "Macedonians". They justified their hegemony through a manufactured history which was closer to mythology. But as long as all was peace and quiet, it didn't seem to matter much.

Beneath the surface, however, there is a very dark side to Macedonia. A side stained by Serb influence, and tainted by criminal money. The elite made millions by breaking United Nations sanctions against Serbia. In 1994 I remember sitting at the border checkpoint at night — the same place where the refugees are now suffering — watching convoys of fuel waved through and speeding towards Belgrade.

War criminals such as Arkan have substantial property business interests in Skopje

and the town's casinos are a haven for Bosnian Serb, Montenegrin money-launderers and their cigarette smuggling money. Zoran Janakovic, the Yugoslav Ambassador and a close crony of President Milosevic, wields huge influence in Skopje. His writ runs in places that Western diplomacy cannot reach.

It is the dark side of Macedonia that we have witnessed this week, in its contemptuous treatment of the refugees. But despite the protestations, there is no good reason why most Kosovan refugees cannot stay in Macedonia. The west, where most Albanians live, is fertile and not overpopulated. Massive short-term help is needed, but that is all. The last thing that most refugees want is to be torn from a potentially supportive rural Islamic environment and relocated in some bleak hostel in Stockholm or Dagenham. The fuss about the tide of refugees is almost entirely political; if they remain for any length of time in Macedonia, they will not destabilise the state, only the privileged bosses with their old nomenklatura connections.

But the West must tackle this issue, and quickly. It is time foreign ministers saw the Skopje government system for what it really is — a relic of communism that needs rapid democratisation. If they do not, and widespread disorder breaks out, the communist dinosaurs will bring down the roof on the state itself.

As the entire state is essentially financed by the IMF, the power exists to force through rapid change. The Government has made some genuinely helpful gestures to improve ethnic relations, such as the release of all political prisoners from jail, but much more needs to be done. Higher education in the Albanian language needs full legitimisation and public spending must be fairly directed to minority areas.

The Macedonian and Greek Governments must be put under more pressure to resolve the name of the state, a long-running sore that prevents normal ties between Skopje and its natural economic partners in Salonika and prosperous, EU-orientated northern Greece. Turkey must be stopped from playing cheap politics with Skopje over national issues to irritate Athens.

But events are moving very fast, and some of these and other human rights reforms may be too late to prevent chaos and fragmentation. Nato should prepare plans for a de facto protectorate, as all previous history of the "Macedonian Question" shows that a crisis in Macedonia has been the catalyst for a much wider Balkan war. It is an unpleasant reality that should be faced if the darkness is not to spread over the whole southern Balkan region.

The author's book, *The New Macedonian Question*, will be published by Macmillan next month.

comment@the-times.co.uk



Patriots for peace

Labour is wrong to denounce critics of this conflict. Dissent is honourable, argues Andrew Roberts

Voltaire would have found life difficult in today's Labour Party. Where is the space for principled dissent? Scotland's election campaign opened yesterday, and even before it began it had been marked by unattractive intolerance, and not from the Nationalists. Alex Salmond's entirely principled opposition to Nato's bombing of Serbia, which he claims has strengthened President Milosevic and worsened the plight of the Kosovan Albanians, drew a cheap, sneering response from Robin Cook. The SNP leader's criticisms of the offensive against Serbia, or at least the present airstrikes, have made him "the toast of Belgrade", says the Foreign Secretary, and "simply unfit to lead" in Scotland because he was "standing shoulder to shoulder with Milosevic".

A glance at the history books would show Mr Cook that, far from making them unfit to lead, opposing wars has afforded British politicians a fast track into office.

When the Tory press misrepresented the Labour leader Ramsay MacDonald's principled stand against the Great War as pro-German, it was rightly condemned in Labour circles as an unwarranted slur on his patriotism. Now that new Labour tries the same trick, we are told it is within the bounds of legitimate political discourse.

But the career of MacDonald should cause Mr Cook to reflect. Denounced as a traitor and pacifist in 1914 when he was neither, MacDonald became, for a time, the most unpopular man in Britain. He lost his West Leicester seat in the December 1918 election by 14,000 votes. Yet only six years later he was Prime Minister, borne to power by an electorate that by 1924 largely agreed with his assertion that the war had "put back the clock of civilisation a century in four years".

The Prime Minister during that war had been David Lloyd George, also no pacifist, who had virulently opposed the Boer War only 14 years before. Like Mr Salmond today, he believed Britain was committing an "unpardonable folly" fighting an aggressive war of "dubious legality". Both men said that while British servicemen deserved support, the politicians who deployed them deserved only criticism.

For his stand, Lloyd George was burnt in effigy in Crieth, bludgeoned at Bangor, and escaped from a riot in Birmingham, in which two

people died, only by dressing up as a policeman. "The man who tries to make the flag an object of a single party is a greater traitor to that flag than any man who fires at it," said Lloyd George, in words that Mr Salmond could reiterate with profit against Mr Cook. As the sheen of imperialism faded with the knowledge of the methods by which the Boer War was finally won, Lloyd George's career was boosted.

Britain has a long and honourable tradition of brave politicians opposing wars they consider wrongful, and their stands have rarely harmed them in the long run. William Pitt the Elder denounced

the American War of Independence and the Prime Minister, Lord North, offered to resign in his favour once he was proved right. Lord Salisbury opposed the Crimean War, and it only enhanced his reputation for independent thought and action. Charles James Fox even opposed the Napoleonic Wars in 1803, but it did not prevent him from becoming Foreign Secretary three years later. For Mr Salmond to join this distinguished roll of objectors to the British Empire, the Scottish are not quite so collectively jingoistic as the rest of the United Kingdom. It was no accident, as Roy Jenkins stated in his biography of Gladstone, that the constituency of Midlothian was chosen for the Liberal leader to deliver his philippics against Disraeli's "Forward" policies, which had led to much bloodshed in Zululand and Afghanistan. "It was a story that was to repeat itself in minor key," adds Jenkins, "just over a hundred years later when Scotland was noticeably cooler on the Falklands war." It was cooler still over the Gulf War.

If Mr Salmond is accurately articulating what the opinions of his people might be in a few years' time about this latest adventure, sharing an opinion of the war that stretches across the political kaleidoscope from Tony Benn's Radicals to Alan Clark's High Tories, then Mr

Cook's smears will prove as myopic as they are historically illiterate. For nowhere in Labour's 1997 manifesto was a mandate requested so to alter the nature of Nato as to unleash a war on a state which posed no threat to any Nato member.

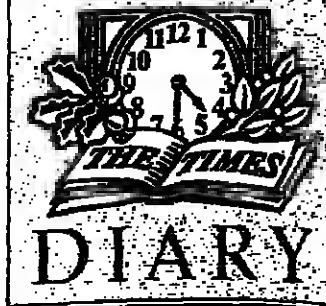
There might have been a case to make for an all-out ground war liberation of Kosovo, or for arming the Kosovan Liberation Army to fight the West's battle as the Mujahidin did in Afghanistan in the 1980s, or even for telling the Kosovan Albanians to try to make the best of their oppression as it was beyond Nato's remit to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign states. Yet there is no case to be made for the present embarrassed, lukewarm and hugely counter-productive policy, and Mr Salmond is not "standing shoulder to shoulder" with Mr Milosevic for saying so.

The historian A.J.P. Taylor used to say that the two World Wars were essentially fought between the British House of Commons and the German High Command. Criticism continued unabated throughout the two wars in Britain; indeed both Herbert Asquith and Neville Chamberlain, who led the nation into the conflicts, were removed by the political process during them. The fact that free, informed debate carries on during the wars which Britain fights enormously strengthens her sense of moral superiority. This can be a tangible wartime asset. As Richard Overy's seminal book on the Second World War, *Why the Allies Won*, puts it: "Whatever the rights and wrongs of the Allied cause, the belief that they fought on the side of righteousness equipped them with a powerful moral armament," which translated

into greater manifestation of a country's commitment to the great liberal values can be imagined than openly disputing the merits of a war while it is still being fought. As John Simpson reports from Belgrade, it is not happening there, any more than it does in any authoritarian regime. By resorting to gross misrepresentation and name-calling, the Government risks stopping such valuable criticism happening here too.

The author's biography of Lord Salisbury will be published in September.

comment@the-times.co.uk



Duke's snub

AN OFFER by the Duke of Edinburgh to participate in next month's opening of the Welsh assembly has been spurned. The discourtesy is adding to royal anxiety about the sidelining of the Queen and her family from the ceremonies heralding the inauguration of the Celtic parliaments.

The Duke suggested that he might read a lesson during the service at Llandaff Cathedral in Cardiff, which is being held before the opening to mark the event. The Duke and the Prince of Wales will be accompanying the Queen to the ecumenical service which has been organised by Cymru, a body representing churches in Wales.

But I hear the organisers have declined the ducal overture, explaining that they "would prefer someone who is Welsh to give the reading". With an emphasis on promoting an image of Cymru during the opening functions, the chances are the lecture will now be taken by the likes of Tom Jones or Shirley Bassey.

DEJAN NIKOLIC, the organiser of the Belgrade Marathon, has reassured me that the race will go ahead this month as planned, although numbers will be down. Runners will bolt past the smoking ruins of the Interior Ministries, police academy and air defence building.



SUSAN PATTERSON, the American soprano appearing at the Coliseum for three months, is homesick. As Margarita in the ENO's production of *Mephistopheles*, in Act III she is supposed to sing: "I see it clearly, the alley leading straight to Martha's garden." But last week, Patterson (above) experienced a moment that Freud would have appreciated and sang instead: "The alley leading straight to Martha's Vineyard."

AFTER German dancers imported their own soil for a show at Sadler's Wells, a Taiwanese group has gone one better: Cloud Gate Dance Theatre has brought in three tonnes of rice for its debut at the Islington theatre next week.

WHILE the BBC urges its staff to be sensitive about using the word British, James Boyle has made a rare apology for an example of crass anti-Semitism on Radio 4.

The Controller has expressed his regrets to the Board of Deputies of British Jews over a reference to pig's organs in *The Ghost at No 12*. Mr Boyle acknowledged it was "offensive to Jews, made fun of their religious beliefs and pandered to stereotypes of Jewish people".

EDWARD, SOMEBODY WANTS TICKETS FOR THE FIRST NIGHT!

ROYAL WEDDING TICKETS



UNISON, the union for town hall workers, is considering applying Best Value criteria, new Labour's excuse for sacking road sweepers and the like, to its £1 million contribution to the party in the hope of halving the donation.

TORIES in Richmond, Park, Jeremy Hanley's former seat on the Thames, are eyeing up Chris Patten as their candidate. Hanley, the erstwhile chairman, lost the last election, and has let it be known that he does not intend to challenge the Liberal Democrat incumbent's near-3,000 majority.

Chris already has a house here and could easily beat the Libs, gushes one Tory. But Lavender, his wife, could be an obstacle: "She would need a lot of persuading after his humiliation at Bath."

A Tate gallery spokesman has apologised that Chris Burden's sculpture, *When Robots Rule: The Two Minute Airplane Factory*, has suffered a mechanical breakdown.

EDWARD WELSH

'Millions of hopeful couples are keenly pursuing love's young dream of a big house on Easy Street with sponsors winding round the door'

Up until very recently, Wee Willie Winkie, as you may have heard, ran through the town, upstairs and downstairs, in his nightgown. He did this every evening, to ensure that all the children were in bed. But he does not do that, now. Now, every evening, he runs up upstairs, to his own bed, and he stays there. He does not run downstairs at all. Mrs Winkie, having run upstairs a minute earlier, will not let him. She will not let him wear his nightgown, either. That is because the Winkies no longer give a tuppenny damn about anybody else's children. They are obsessed only with conceiving one of their own. For this is, quite literally, a seminal moment in the Winkies' lives, and if it is the right seminal moment, then, in nine months' time, the Winkies will be in clover: if, that is to say, an extremely wee Willie Winkie

pops squawking out of Mrs Winkie at the last bong of midnight 1999, and thus becomes the first millennial baby, the world will beat a path to their door.

Laying, as it beats, a brand-new path, hanging a brand-new door, and building a brand-new house behind it, full of brand-new furniture. The world will then put a brand-new car in the brand-new Winkie garage, and a brand-new satellite dish on the Winkie roof, severely to include a lifetime supply of free petrol and a lifetime supply of free television channels. Very soon thereafter, lifetimes of free rusks, free toys, free clothes, free holidays, free banjo lessons, free health insurance, free dry-cleaning, free MCC membership, free houseplants, all manner of free-gags and services, will wind their eager way to Chez Winkie, to say nothing of Max Clifford,

the entire staff of *Hello!* magazine, and, naturally, Mr and Mrs Tony Blair, doubtless bearing a lifetime supply of free initiatives.

But it is, of course, a lottery, and you may therefore be sure that the Winkies are far from alone in hopefully eaking a nighty punt. According to informed sources down at The Gynaecologist and Duck, this first week of April is critical, which is why the nation's nocturnal streets are eerily deserted and their houses atypically dark, if not exactly silent: from Land's End to John o'Groat's, millions of hopeful couples are keenly pursuing love's young dream of a big house on Easy Street with sponsors winding round the door. That millions-minus-one are

doomed to disappointment does not stay them for a moment — though who can say it mightn't be the clincher if it did, this is horse-shoe-nail country, a moment is a long time on the cusp of a millennium, a moment too early or too late and millions-minus-one will be looking at parental lifetimes of unfree everything, never mind missing the neighbourhood fireworks party through being either pregnantly immobile or sitting in a maternity bed with an armful of unsubsidised new liability howling for the nipple.



But I am not here, even if I seem to be meandering that way, to ponder the morality or catastrophe of the current procreant shenanigans: I am here, as I generally am when things of

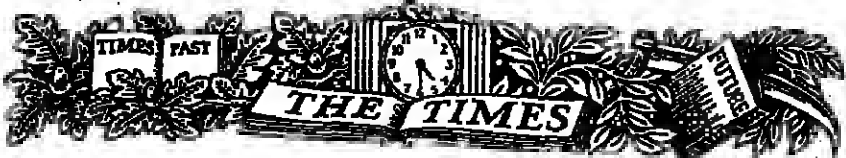
major pith and moment are afoot, to ponder what might be in it for me. For while I break no confidences in saying that Mrs Coren and I are not ourselves going for the title — physiological realities must be faced, hanging nursery wallpaper is definitely out, with my back — that is not to say we are hors de combat in the matter of millennial freebies. In a culture as egregiously opportunist as ours, there must be unmet other profitable strokes for enterprising greedies to pull at the stroke of 2000.

I haven't yet hit upon the ideal, mind, and wouldn't tell you if I had, but let me be generous enough to toss you a few suggestions which, for those readers similarly disinclined to spend next January changing nappies yet keen to make a fast bob or two, would probably do in a pinch. A midnight fax to The

Times, say, declaring you had just heard the first millennial cuckoo might well secure a lifetime of free hearing aids, a cannily flattened tyre would allow you to make the first AA breakdown call of the millennium, surely bringing you free lifetime bracket-clock insurance, a chance to win a stylish timeshare on the Welsh Riviera, and a scale model of Lord Montagu, and becoming the first person in Y2K to join the Conservative Party would almost certainly mean a lifetime of free lawnmowing and shoeshines from William and Ffion.

Then again, why not kill two millennial birds with one stone? Start celebrating on December 1 and, one nano-second after December 31, turn up at your nearest all-night chemist with 2000's first hangover. You could be looking at a lifetime of free Alka-Seltzer.

هكذا مش الاصل



THE FINAL TEST

Monetary union should not be the gateway to political union

At a time when Europe's capacity for unity and international leadership has been so tragically questioned in the Balkans, it may seem troubling to discuss the issue of whether the single currency will create a political federation in Europe. Yet the human catastrophe in the former Yugoslavia should act as a reminder of the dangers of imposing artificial political templates on the patchwork of national identities and interests which constitutes political reality in Europe.



FIVE TESTS FOR EUROPE

When Tony Blair announced his Government's decision to try to persuade the British public to join monetary union, *The Times* suggested five tests that the project should meet before his Government could consider calling a referendum. The fifth and most fundamental of these related to the political implications of monetary union.

Despite Mr Blair's breezy assurance that there is no overriding constitutional objection to monetary union, this fear of a march towards political unification remains the most important reason for popular hesitation about the single currency in Britain. The Prime Minister insists that fears about a drive towards deeper political integration are either irrelevant or vastly exaggerated. But most of the political leaders in EMU countries hold the opposite view. It may be, of course, that Mr Blair is right and continental politicians and central bankers are mistaken. Before Britain even contemplates joining EMU, there needs to be strong evidence that Mr Blair's view about the nature of monetary union is going to prevail.

The first test of the political implications of EMU relates simply to the ideological dynamics of Europe. Before the Prime Minister can even hope to be believed on the political innocuousness of EMU, there will have to be an end to the rhetoric from Brussels, Berlin, Paris and Rome about the political "deepening" of Europe. At present many European leaders continue to advocate curtailing national vetoes. Mr Blair can argue that all this is mere rhetoric, but as long as the leaders of Europe continue to be driven by federalist aspirations, it will be logical to conclude that they will use EMU to drive forward this project.

This is particularly true because of the second implication of monetary union. The single currency, by its very existence, will create economic forces which could encourage deeper political integration. By eliminating currency adjustments, EMU will focus attention on the competitive implications of divergent wage levels, tax structures and social security arrangements across Europe. As a result Germany and other high tax, high wage countries may try to impose their high costs on the rest of Europe by campaigning for majority voting on taxes and for restrictions on working conditions and "social dumping".

A third source of pressure for political co-ordination may arise from the EMU stability pact and the impact of future economic crises on different European countries. In the United States, when Texas falls into recession, its citizens pay less tax to Washington and receive more social benefits, while those of booming states pay proportionately more and receive less. This creates an automatic, but strictly temporary, redistribution mechanism that tends to reduce the impact of regional booms and busts. In Europe, no such mechanisms exist. While economists will argue about the theories behind this issue, the reality will be tested as soon as a part of Europe is hit by economic crisis. Britain must see firm evidence that pressures for a bigger federal budget do not, in practice, intensify.

A fourth source of political problems arises from the institutions created by EMU. The stability pact imposes limits on public borrowing by EMU countries. If the European Central Bank involves itself in Europe's fiscal debates, as the Bundesbank did in Germany, the pressures will mount for European finance ministers to co-ordinate their fiscal policies and speak with one voice. EMU is also creating a culture of unanimity for members of the Euro-11 in their international dealings, with the G7, the IMF and the US. If such pressures for European unity keep mounting, they will present a final, decisive, argument against Britain joining EMU. Britain would suffer an irreversible erosion of its limited, but distinctive, influence on the world stage.

SERBS BEARING GIFTS

A cynical ceasefire offer that Nato has rightly dismissed

Nato's military commanders and political leaders alike had expected some sort of initiative from Serbia in advance of the Orthodox Easter weekend. They had also given warning in advance that "hollow half-measures" would not be allowed to stop the bombing. However, even the most hardened observer of Balkan politics could not have been prepared for the extraordinary performance by Vuk Draskovic, the Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister, in televised appearances yesterday. Mr Draskovic calmly announced the predicted temporary ceasefire with all due flourish but added that the one million or more Kosovan Albanian refugees were welcome to return to their homeland.

This proclamation is unlikely to be received with rapture on the Macedonian border. Even if Kosovan Albanians were inclined to forget the events of the recent past and place their faith in the words of the Serbian authorities, they have ashes not houses to return to. This is such an utterly shameless diplomatic "offer" that Saddam Hussein must have felt a sense of

envy. President Milosevic is well aware of the real conditions he needs to satisfy for serious negotiations to be reopened. He continues to show little interest in them.

If Mr Milosevic shows the slightest sign of slowing his onslaught on the Kosovans this week, it will be because he feels that he has already succeeded in meeting his objectives. The terror sown over the past two weeks may well have been enough by itself to persuade every single Kosovo Albanian to head towards the border. The only realistic prospect of their ever heading home will come if Nato's bombing alters the balance of power in Belgrade.

There is one aspect of the Draskovic statement that should be taken seriously. The Serbian leadership might be inclined to conclude an "internal settlement" with those members of the Kosovan political class whom it holds captive. A deal of this form would be no more acceptable than the latest nominal "ceasefire". Mr Milosevic's main aim over the next few days will be to spread division among the Nato nations, not to reconcile Kosovo with Serbia.

CHALK AND CHEESE

Blunkett should be supported on performance-related pay

David Blunkett's proposals on teaching salaries are, according to Doug McAvoy, the general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, speaking yesterday, a "tyranny" that represents the "greatest challenge" to the NUT in a century and upon which rests "the future of the education service in England and Wales". The policies pursued by the Prime Minister, he declared, were simply "disaster, disaster, disaster" for the teaching profession. The same blueprint was stoutly defended by Estelle Morris, the Schools Minister, who told a sceptical audience at the conference of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers that she was prepared to be "flexible" and that for the first 12 months the new scheme would be "voluntary".

This rhetoric might lead an innocent observer to conclude that Tony Blair and Mr Blunkett are setting out to slash classroom salaries. The truth is that the Government plans to spend an extra £1 billion on pay over the next two years but intends to direct these additional resources towards the most talented teachers. An aspect, but not the only element, of this package involves whether an individual teacher's efforts translate into improving results for pupils. This is the "outrage" that led to Mr Blunkett's heckling by the NUT on Saturday and Mr McAvoy's outburst.

The NUT now plans to call for a ballot on a one-day strike as part of its campaign of industrial activity. The teaching unions believe that Mr Blunkett can be forced into diluting his ideas beyond recognition. The Secretary of State should not buckle at this blackmail. The Government has offered enough concessions on this issue already. These proposals represent the means by

which teaching salaries can be increased in a fashion that will not divert resources from the central task of raising standards.

The NUT executive would, it seems, prefer equality of poverty to differential affluence. It argues that either the task of evaluating merit among teachers is impossible or that to do so would be enormously divisive. Mr McAvoy has claimed that it would be invidious to make distinctions among those who are performing the same basic functions. On this logic, the salaries bill at Manchester United and Macclesfield Town should be identical.

Teachers rightly aspire for their occupation to be recognised as a "profession". One of the most elementary features of a profession is that of individual contracts, not collective bargaining. Performance-related pay may well be rotten news for full-time union officials. It is, however, a real opportunity for ordinary teachers.

Mr McAvoy's opposition is not, however, very surprising. The most astonishing aspect of this whole saga is that David Willetts, the Shadow Education Secretary, seems to be supporting the unions. Mr Willetts has condemned strike threats but believes Mr Blunkett would be "making a serious mistake if he presses ahead with a scheme which the whole profession considers unworkable". Conservative ministers, correctly, never permitted the NUT a *de facto* veto on policy when they held office. The Tories should be pushing Mr Blunkett to go faster and further in the direction that he is taking. Mr Willetts will be making a serious mistake if he presses ahead with a position that the vast majority of voters, including almost all Conservative sympathisers, will consider utterly incredible.

KLA resistance to Serb 'brutality'

From Professor Geoffrey Lee Williams

Sir, Can I suggest, if Nato is unable to deploy ground forces to Kosovo in support of its air operations, that there is an alternative strategy which is worth contemplating. This is to give fully-fledged support to the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), whose insurgency now stands to benefit from the diminution of Serb strength on the ground arising from Nato's air attacks.

The congenial weakness of the KLA could now be reversed by enabling it to exploit four features of the strategic situation which are likely to develop as spring passes into summer:

1. The existence of a greatly weakened adversary on the ground in Kosovo.
2. The existence of a unifying cause arising from the brutalisation of the ethnic Albanian population by the Serbs which could encourage fierce resistance to oppression and expulsion.
3. Favourable geographical features which can be exploited in guerrilla warfare.
4. The existence of outside support from the world's best armed military alliance.

Clearly, the KLA's strategic aims would be full independence for Kosovo but with entrenched rights for the Serb population, guaranteed by the presence of a Nato peace-enforced contingent, similar to those now deployed in Bosnia under the rubric of an international peace agreement.

Yours sincerely,
GEOFFREY LEE WILLIAMS,
The Institute of Economic and Political Studies,
Instep Cambridge,
Warkworth House,
Warkworth Terrace,
Cambridge CB1 1EE.
April 6.

From Rabbi Dr Sidney Brichto

Sir, The Rabbis said, "He who saves a life saves a world". Members of the Jewish community like myself must be thrilled by the courage and compassion shown by Clare Short as she led Kosovan refugees into the Macedonian relief camp (report, April 6). Sent by her Government only to observe, as an individual she felt compelled to act.

Had we had politicians of her like in the 1940s, how many millions of Jews, Gypsies and others might have been saved through this example?

Sir Alfred Sherman deplores Nato going beyond its remit as a defensive alliance (letter, April 6). Clare Short may be ushering us into a new political age which reflects the public view that governments can no longer act purely out of self-interest.

People now seem ready for soldiers to die to save the lives of the persecuted out of a sense of a common humanity.

No wonder Saddam Hussein is the only Arab leader supporting a government which is victimising his own co-religionists (report, April 6). He knows that the determination of Nato to prevent oppression without regard to national boundaries spells an end for all dictators who, through their awesome brutality, terrorise their citizens and neighbouring states into submission.

Faithfully,
SIDNEY BRICHTO
(Senior Vice-President, Union of Liberal & Progressive Synagogues),
The Montagu Centre,
21 Maple Street, WIP 6DS.
bestaylor@aol.com
April 6.

From Mr Larry Rushton

Sir, Clare Short, a British minister, is presumably a guest in Macedonia (today's front page). Therefore she should not be publicly urging its government officials to disobey instructions.

This is particularly offensive when they are struggling to cope with a refugee problem greatly aggravated by British government actions.

Yours sincerely,
LARRY RUSHTON,
10 Smith Close,
Piddington, Northampton NN7 2DW.
April 6.

From Professor Emeritus Philip S. James

Sir, Is it not folly for a pot to call a kettle black? Is it not a war crime for us and our bomb-happy Allies to endanger the lives of our gallant servicemen by raining down death and destruction upon open cities?

One can only reflect that an untutored generation can hardly be expected to recall the twin lessons of the 19th century that a nation's internal affairs are its own and that punitive expeditions have usually done more harm than good.

Permit me, Sir, to prophesy that, faced as we now appear to be with a consensus of informed opinion against this ominously dangerous piece of folly, Mr Blair would do well to execute one of his customary political retreats.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP S. JAMES,
Chesnut View, Mill Lane,
Whitfield, Brackley,
Northamptonshire NN13 5TQ.
April 2.

Child's right to British nationality

From Sir Dick Pantlin

Sir, Mr James Wilde (letter, March 27) describes the Foreign Secretary's move to restore full British citizenship to the islanders of Tristan da Cunha as "a just, if belated, restoration of their rightful status".

It is to be hoped that the Foreign Secretary will correct a further unjustifiable omission by ensuring that second-generation children of British citizens born in continental EU countries do not automatically lose their right to pass on British nationality, no doubt in the belief that they will have "gone native".

It is of great importance to Britain that more and more families decide to set up homes and create businesses in continental Europe. Their children and grandchildren will learn foreign languages and be used to working in a foreign culture, thus becoming ideal candidates later to work in the UK or abroad for British interests. These restrictions do not apply to those "in Crown service", yet families in business and other professions are treated differently, which is absurd.

This matter could be solved by but a tiny alteration to the same Act ("Birth in these States being equivalent to birth in the UK"), could not take more than a few minutes of parliamentary time, cannot possibly meet with political opposition, is within the spirit of EU legislation which encourages mobility of labour, and would avoid condemning a child — who might well wish in due course to return to Britain — to a future linked to the actions of his or her parents and grandparents.

Speed traps

From Mr T. Keith Taylor

Sir, Mr R. J. Butler (letter, March 31) criticises the publication of details of speed-control measures. Surely the use of cameras and the like is to reduce traffic speeds to the legal level and not primarily to entrap motorists.

Sincerely,
T. KEITH TAYLOR,
Acers, 11 Green Oak Road,
Watton, Norfolk IP25 6BE.
April 3.

From Mr A. G. E. White

Sir, Recently browsing the microfiche of *The Times* for August 1914 for Open University work, I was surprised to note, in passing, two editorial features advising motorists of the positioning of speed traps. I did not see any adverse comment from the police.

Have we become too subservient?

Yours humbly,
ARCHIE WHITE,
11 Tyndale Court,
Kirk Sandall, Doncaster DN3 1RN.

Irked by inaction

From Mr Chris Ogilvie-Taylor

Sir, Any sympathy that I had for our manufacturing industry in decline has fast evaporated following my recent experience of trying to place business, on behalf of a large retailer, with a UK manufacturer of printed fabrics, rather than the usual Far East source of supply.

My brief was for fabric finished as a fashion accessory, which required a certain amount of handworking. Everyone I spoke to could print the fabric but didn't want to do the finishing; so they suggested a competitor!

Not one company out of the 12 that I called had the gumption to ask for more details, take my name, or say they'd look into it and get back to me. I got the impression that it all sounded too much trouble to them, and as it

didn't fit exactly with what they'd been doing for the last 20 years, they'd be best to let it pass.

With such a large order at stake, we've returned to sourcing from outside the UK but this experience leaves me bemused and exasperated. I'm quite sure that those dozen companies badly need new business but they wouldn't adapt themselves to my needs.

The only way for our manufacturing industry to survive is to ask customers what they want and respond to those needs and opportunities, not just distribute what they've already got.

Yours faithfully,
CHRIS OGILVIE-TAYLOR
(Managing Director),
Marsden Grant International Ltd,
58 Queen Anne Street, WIM 9LA.
April 6.

From Mr E. W. Lighton

Sir, If disclosing the locations of speed cameras encourages lawbreaking, why then are there usually large notices warning drivers of these devices?

The legality or otherwise of the disclosure of speed traps by those unauthorised to do so is more debatable.

Yours faithfully,
E. W. LIGHTON,
11 Ryebank Avenue,
Crewe CW1 3SW.
a131755@btinternet.co.uk
April 1.

From Mr Malcolm Penny

Sir, It is perhaps a matter of personal perception, but I would have thought that drivers are not "trapped" into exceeding speed limits; instead, they volunteer themselves for prosecution.

Yours faithfully,
MALCOLM PENNY,
57 Boylston Road,
Maidenhead,
Berkshire SL6 4HR.
April 1.

Should I ask to be removed from my newspaper's *Times* paper-round?

Yours faithfully,
HENRY RICHMOND,
39 Hodges Court,
Marlborough Road,
Oxford OX1 4NZ.
March 28.

Should I ask to be removed from my newspaper's *Times* paper-round?

Yours faithfully,
HENRY RICHMOND,
39 Hodges Court,
Marlborough Road,
Oxford OX1 4NZ.
March 28.

The landfill tax

From the Director, Business and Environment, The Paper Federation of Great Britain, and others.

Sir, We welcome the Chancellor's recognition in the Budget of the importance of the landfill tax in encouraging more recycling. The increased tax will be a valuable instrument supporting the recovery and recycling of waste by ensuring that the costs of landfill more accurately reflect its environmental costs.

However, we believe that the Treasury must go further and increase the overall proportion of the tax earmarked for investment in the recovery and recycling infrastructure. Without such investment the substantial increases in recycling which the Government and the public desire will not be achieved.

Yours faithfully,
BRYAN BATEMAN,
Director, Business and Environment,
The Paper Federation of Great Britain,
RAY GEORGESON,
Executive Director, Waste Watch,
KEN MANTON,
Chairman, Waste and Environment Committee, Local Government Association.

The Paper Federation of Great Britain,
Papermakers House,
Rivenhall Road, Swindon SN5 7BD.
April 6.

Business letters, page 27

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Business plan for single currency

From Mr Giles Radice, MP for Durham North (Conservative), and Mr Bill Rammell, MP for Horlow (Labour)

Sir, MORI, Gallup, NOP, Eurofile, City Research and others have consistently shown that British business is behind the single currency. The poll published yesterday by *Business for Sterling* (report, March 31) has, in our view, been designed around leading questions and false logic.

With 86 per cent of those surveyed having heard "little" or "nearly nothing" about the implications of the single currency, it is no surprise that the base of British euroscepticism is rooted in confusion and misinformation. This problem is most marked among smaller businesses, which are the least informed and the most eurosceptic. Perhaps *Business for Sterling* should focus more on why these two factors are so frequently related.

Interestingly, it remains silent about its finding that 56 per cent of businesses say Britain will end up losing out while other countries in the eurozone benefit. Similarly, it hasn't mentioned the 51 per cent of businesses who agree that our future is in Europe and that we have to go in wholeheartedly.

Businesses across Britain need to plan for the single currency as a reality. Whilst *Business for Sterling* might want to put its head in the ground, real businesses need to be informed and prepared for the single currency. This is the real issue for business.

Yours sincerely,
GILES RADICE,
Chairman, European Movement,
BILL RAMMELL,
Chairman, Labour Movement for Europe,
House of Commons.
April 1.

Free for all

From Sir Hugh Leggatt

Sir, The Director of the National Portrait Gallery, Mr Charles Saumarez Smith (letter, April 2), points out the failure of compulsory admission charges to the national museums and galleries imposed by the Heath Government and the disastrous drop in visitor numbers to this institution in 1974.

In 1970, when the Wilson Government was in power, the Treasury decreed that entrance charges should be levied to visit the Annieloni portrait of the Queen at the National Portrait Gallery.

However, the Treasury was outflanked by Jennie Lee (then Minister for the Arts), who told it that the donor (myself) would offer to hang the portrait in "Harrods stores" if the then owners would agree.

I asked Miss Lee the Treasury's reply. It was simply, "Yes, Minister".

Yours faithfully,
HUGH LEGGATT
21 Rue du Lac,
CH-1800 Vevey, Switzerland.
April 6.

Bishop's move?

From the Right Reverend Henry Richmond

Sir, On Saturday (March 27) my wife received junk mail, inviting her to buy a book which would bestow longevity by putting her in touch with her former incarnations. Her reply was to ask to be removed from their mailing list.

I then read an article in *The Times* Weekend, informing me that the name Joshua, the Hebrew name for Jesus, was "a negative name. Intelligent but introverted, and does not cope well with stress. Will experience relationship problems in late teens that could lead to drug and alcohol abuse".

Should I ask to be removed from my newspaper's *Times* paper-round?

Yours faithfully,
HENRY RICHMOND,
39 Hodges Court,
Marlborough Road,
Oxford OX1 4NZ.
March 28.

Clarification sought

From Mr Peter Wade

Sir, To assist Mr Anthony P. Moran's search for an expression to describe Service personnel wearing fluorescent waistcoats over camouflage uniforms (letter, April 6), I feel that the word "stealth" should be in there somewhere.

Yours faithfully,
PETER WADE,
12 Bell Close,
Colchester, Essex CO2 8EP.
April 6.

Rites of spring

From Mr Antony Walker

Sir, You do not report daily that the Sun rose in the East, so why report annually that the National Union of Teachers is opposed to reform of the education system (April 3)?

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY G. T. WALKER,
Spiti Hippocampus,
PO Box 70,
Pissouri 4607, Cyprus.
April 3.

Mr. Olivier is also especially effective in his handling of the aristocratic traitors and in defending himself from the criticisms of that incorrigible grouser, Williams; nor does he fail when forced to stand and deliver up his rhetoric at the breach of Harfleur and on the morning of St. Crispin's day. It is a finely judged performance. Miss Jessica Tandy and Miss Ivy St. Helier, borne on a litter for the French lesson, live daintily up to their silken splendour.

Rate cut speculation spurs European stocks but weakens sterling

Shares surge to record high

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE London stock market yesterday hit a record high as the pound slid to an all-time low against the dollar. The FTSE 100 index of leading shares closed up 85.8 points at 6,415.8 on the first day of the new financial year, having earlier posted an all-time trading high of 6,443.9.

The market was also bolstered by a flood of fresh money as investors rushed to meet the final deadline for Pepsa and a strong rise on Wall Street while European markets were shut for the Easter Monday holiday. However, later gains were limited by a poor start on Wall Street yesterday with the Dow Jones industrial average standing about 50 points lower — back below the 10,000 level — by lunchtime in New York.

Other European markets also played catch-up with Wall Street, with Frankfurt shares climbing 2.6 per cent, while Paris shares closed up 1.76 per cent.

Expectations of an ECB rate cut after its meeting tomorrow were tempered, however, by hawkish comments from Jean-Claude Trichet, Governor of the Bank of France. M Trichet gave warning that the euro was falling towards a level where the ECB may be required to "demonstrate its vigilance", adding that he saw no "change in tone" to the ECB's policy stance.

The euro, however, made sharp gains in later trading as traders greeted the news of the Yugoslav ceasefire as positive for the embattled currency. The euro climbed more than a cent from its lows against the dollar to trade at \$1.0840. Against the pound, the euro jumped from 67.37p to 68.10p. Sterling also fell sharply against the dollar slipping more than a cent and a half to \$1.5898 — its lowest level since September 1997. Traders said that expectations of further UK rate cuts and the possibility that US rates may rise is helping to depress the pound against the dollar.

However, economists emphasised that the MPC meeting, which begins today, could still prove close run with recent surveys suggesting that the economic growth rate is beginning to pick up again.

Three surveys published yesterday added to the impression that the economy is at a turning point with business confidence sharply improving. The Confederation of British Industry consumer, business and professional services survey reported a rapid improvement in sentiment with companies confident of a return to robust growth in the second half of the year.

A separate Institute of Management business confidence survey also showed a sharp upturn in confidence while business enthusiasm for further interest rate cuts is waning, although a clear majority still wants rates to fall further. The breakdown of the data, however, confirmed that the economy is still operating at "two speeds" with manufacturing confidence still below its long-term average.

The BDO business trends index also rose for the third consecutive month suggesting that the economy is slowly returning to growth. The survey which uses a "poll of polls" approach, however, is still pointing to sub-trend growth across the year and suggests that there are no immediate signs of rising inflation.

Stock market, page 26

Huge sales rise boosts mobile phone firms

BY CHRIS AYRES

NEARLY 1.9 million Britons bought mobile phones over the past three months, according to figures put yesterday. With some analysts estimating that more than a quarter of the country's population now use mobile phones, the figures follow the mobile phone industry's busiest Christmas trading period during which Britain's big network operators — Vodafone, Cellnet, Orange, and One2One — attracted a total of 5 million new customers.

Yesterday's figures did not overshoot City expectations, but analysts said that they provided fresh evidence of the success of so-called pre-pay mobile phones. Shares of Vodafone and Orange both made significant gains, while shares of BT and Cable & Wireless, which hold large stakes in Cellnet and One2One respectively, also rose.

Pre-pay mobile phones are typically priced at £69.99 and allow customers to pay for calls in advance. All Britain's mobile phone operators now offer pre-pay phones, which can be bought from retailers such as Tesco and Boots, as well as specialist outlets.

However, one of Britain's largest mobile phone retail chains, the PocketPhone Shop, yesterday gave warning that lower-paying pre-pay phone customers are replacing the mobile operators' higher-worth consumers. The retailer also said that many consumers are being "mis-sold" pre-pay phones, which do not offer them best value for money.

Both the City and mobile phone companies, however, shrugged off these concerns, with analysts reacting most positively to Cellnet's first-quarter figures, which showed that it attracted 479,000 net new customers during the period — a 444 per cent increase on the same quarter of 1998.

Cellnet, however, remained second to Vodafone, which attracted 700,000 net new customers in the UK during the period, and 1.3 million new customers around the world. Vodafone, which is orchestrating a £67 billion merger with America's AirTouch, now has more than 10.4 million customers worldwide.

Orange remained in third place according to yesterday's figures, attracting 370,000 net new customers during the first quarter of this year. Trailing behind Orange was One2One, which is expected to be either floated or sold by its current owners, Cable & Wireless of the UK, and MediaOne of the US. One2One attracted 329,000 new customers during the first quarter, giving it a total of 2.25 million customers.

mobile frenzy, page 27

Telewest shares lifted by CWC talk

BY RAYMOND SNOODY
MEDIA EDITOR

SHARES of Telewest, the cable operator, shot up nearly 7 per cent to a high of 296½p yesterday after growing speculation that it is close to doing a deal with Cable & Wireless, the international telecommunications group.

The 19p rise at Telewest was a reaction to speculation that C&W is considering a plan to merge the residential side of its majority-owned UK cable business — Cable & Wireless Communications (CWC) — with Telewest. Under the plan it is speculated that C&W would then absorb the corporate operations of CWC and that CWC would be taken private.

CWC and Telewest confirmed yesterday that preliminary discussions were being held between them and certain of their major shareholders concerning various corporate options, which may include, among other things, the transfer of various businesses of CWC and Telewest.



Fashion move: Tie Rack, the tie and scarf retailer that was founded and floated during the Eighties high street boom, is to be sold to one of its main Italian suppliers for £22.6 million, just a fifth of its stock market valuation of two years ago (Sarah Cunningham, retail correspondent, writes). Frangi, a producer of silk ties and scarves that is based on Lake Como in northern Italy, is offering 43½p a share. Tie Rack's directors and its main shareholder Vadeo, part of the HSBC banking group, have agreed to sell a total of 42.6 per cent of the group. Roy Bishko, the founder and chairman who took the company to the market in 1987, is remaining as co-chairman alongside Simone Frangi, currently international director of his family's firm. Tie Rack non-executive directors Gillian Oakes and David Spitz, who will be remaining with the company, said in a statement: "The company is going through a difficult period and we believe this cash offer represents good value for shareholders after taking into consideration the downside risks and the time it will take to achieve an acceptable level of profitability." Tie Rack bows out, page 24

Monument Oil talks with several suitors

MONUMENT OIL & GAS, the exploration company in which the former Tory Energy Minister Tim Eggar is chief executive, is in discussions with several oil companies, including Enterprise Oil and Lascmo, which could lead to a takeover (Carl Mortished writes).

The company, which owns extensive exploration acreage in Turkmenistan as well as a 20 per cent share in the Liverpool Bay field, said that it had been approached by a number of parties but had not received a firm proposal.

Tony Craven Walker, chairman and a principal shareholder of Monument, said the company was looking at various options including asset deals as well as acquisitions. "Those talks may or may not lead to a transaction," he said.

The talks stem from Mr Craven Walker's belief that the company needs scale to exploit its three core assets: oil and gas production in Liverpool Bay and exploration prospects in Turkmenistan and Algeria. Last month he opened the door to merger talks by saying the company was keen to participate in the consolidation that has swept across the industry, most recently with the proposed BP Amoco takeover of Arco.

Prescott appoints rail franchising director

JOHN PRESCOTT, the Deputy Prime Minister, will today appoint an executive from within the industry to shake up the railways (Arthur Leathley writes).

Mike Grant, deputy director of property at Railtrack, is to be appointed the new rail franchising director, renewing a working relationship with Sir Alastair Morton, his former boss at Eurotunnel.

Mr Grant, who joined Railtrack only six months ago, was formerly treasurer at Eurotunnel and played a pivotal role in the £8.5 billion refinancing of the debt-laden group. His work at Eurotunnel brought him into close contact with Sir Alastair, who is to head the new Strategic Rail Authority.

Mr Prescott has been anxious to appoint a franchising director with detailed knowledge of the railway industry and a business background. Mr Grant will be responsible for renegotiating franchises with train companies. His appointment follows that of Tom Winsor, a City lawyer, as the rail regulator, whose main role will be to review the access charges imposed on franchising companies by Railtrack.

Game on for US virtual toy seller

FROM ANDREW BUTCHER
IN NEW YORK

NEW YORK'S Internet madness continued yesterday as eToys, a virtual toy seller, became the latest company to be valued by the stock market at more than \$1 billion (£610 million) — despite posting multi-million dollar losses.

The California-based company announced that it would offer about 8 per cent of its shares to the public, raising more than \$80 million and giving it a market capitalisation of about \$1.1 billion.

Succeeding in the Internet toy market will not be the child's play for eToys. The tiny retailer will complete against the name recognition of the likes of Toys 'R Us, which has as much as 20 per cent of the toy market in the US.

For its part, eToys is betting that parents and children will prefer shopping from the comfort of their homes rather than battle through queues and crowds at shopping malls.

To judge from investor response to previous flotations by Internet retailers, it would be no surprise if eToys rockets in value as soon as its shares are traded publicly. Last week, shares in Priceline.com, an Internet site where people bid for airline tickets and accommodation, soared more than 500 per cent on the day that it was listed.

Different from other Internet retailers, eToys has broad support from wholesalers as well as Web-hungry investors. The company has been helped by toy manufacturers that are tired of the unpredictable nature of business at existing toy retailers — Toys 'R Us cut its toy inventory last year as it struggled to lift profitability.

The toy market in the US is worth \$23 billion annually and is dominated by a few large chains.

eToys started selling toys in October, 1997, and was the fifth most-visited Internet retailer by last December. However, it made a \$15.4 million loss in the nine months to December 31. The company has added 75,000 new customers in the first three months of 1999, giving it a customer base of 365,000.

Commentary, page 25

Business Today

Commentary: Niche work if you can get it 25
Stock markets: Telecom sector climbs 26
Bank trends: Equity prices: 28

Mobile phones City reserves judgment on pre-pay frenzy

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	6415.3	(+85.3)
FTSE All Share	2988.28	(+32.08)
Nikkei	10478.71	(+144.63)
Dow Jones	9965.86	(-41.34)
S&P Composite	1377.59	(-3.53)

US RATE

Federal Funds	4 3/4%	(5%)
Long bond	5 3/8%	(5 1/2%)
Yield	5.59%	(5.65%)

STERLING

New York	1.5917	(1.6025)
London	1.5899	(1.6050)
Paris	1.4773	(1.4805)
SF	2.3882	(2.3887)
Yen	120.75	(120.77)
S index	108.0	(108.4)

Tokyo close Yen 121.08

WORTH 500 INDEX

London	1.8841	(1.8788)
SF	1.4722	(1.4803)
Yen	120.75	(120.77)
S index	108.0	(108.4)

Exchange rates Page 24

Robinson nets £5m in option sale

BY DOMINIC WALSH

GERRY ROBINSON, chairman of Granada, has reaped a profit of more than £5 million after taking advantage of the recent strength of the leisure group's share price to cash in share options.

Last week, he exercised 537,500 share options at a cost of almost £1.4 million, selling them on yesterday for nearly £6.7 million — a profit of £5.26 million. Mr Robinson and his family still hold interests in more than 300,000 shares worth a further £3.7 million.

His timing could turn out to be impeccable. Tomorrow ONdigital, the main commercial digital terrestrial TV service, in which Granada has a 50 per cent stake, will announce its first subscriber numbers since the November launch. Analysts are not expecting a spectacular performance.

Yesterday, the shares rose 25p to £12.39 — almost double October's low point of 684p — after Goldman Sachs added Granada to its recommended list of stocks.

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Tie Rack bows out quietly with Italian sale

By Sarah Cunningham
Retail Correspondent

TIE RACK will be leaving the stock market with none of the razzmatazz that greeted its arrival 12 years ago. When it floated in 1987 — just weeks ahead of the market's crash on Black Monday — the issue was 85 times oversubscribed and a queue snaked around the Bank of England as investors made desperate last-minute attempts to get hold of the shares.

Like Sock Shop, Knickerbox and the Body Shop, Tie Rack was riding

on the wave of the Eighties retailing boom. A successful new category had been invented, niche retailing, and investors wanted a part of it.

Now, even though Tie Rack survived as an independent quoted company longer than many of its peers, it has finally succumbed. One of its main suppliers, an Italian family-owned silk scarf and tie manufacturer named Frangi, is buying it. Roy Bishko, the South African entrepreneur who started Tie Rack in 1981, is taking out about £500,000 and is remaining as co-chairman. He will also

own nearly 12 per cent of the company. Frangi, however, is paying just 43p a share for a company that floated at 145p per share.

The stock market has become an increasingly unfriendly environment for small companies. Tie Rack's trading problems over the past 18 months, which have led to repeated profit warnings, had left it looking very vulnerable.

Mr Bishko feels that he has found a safe home for the company. "I'm very pleased the company's future will be secure," he said. "From

my point of view, I have been working full, full, full time; perhaps now I will just be full, full time."

He started out in the retail trade, after false starts in dentistry and the law, with a chain of shoe repair shops. When they failed to prosper, he bought a job lot of ties from a wholesaler and put them in the window at cost price. The ties — or so legend has it — sold out on the same day.

He received backing from Vadepe, a Swiss investment arm of the HSBC banking group, and built up what he claimed was "the smallest multinational

in town". Along the way, however, Tie Rack went through some dreadful times. The high street recession at the beginning of the decade and an ill-advised expansion into the US saw the shares fall to a low of 15p in 1990. The recovery lasted until mid-1997, when the first of its recent profit warnings sent them almost into freefall.

Mr Bishko says he is not bitter about his experiences with the stock market and remains proud of the company's record. "You can look at us and say we floated at 145p and are selling at 43p, but we did make money."

AstraZeneca to ride out losses as patents end

By Paul Durman

TOM MCKILLOP, chief executive of the newly merged AstraZeneca, is planning to ride out the expected loss of sales from Losec and Zestril, the big-selling drugs that are approaching patent expiries.

He said AstraZeneca would aim to "at least replace" the lost sales with new products and drugs licensed in from other companies.

Speaking after the completion of the Anglo-Swedish merger, Dr McKillop said that he was seeking a rapid integration of its two constituent pharmaceutical companies. Shares

US drugs firms to top sales charts

ASTRAZENECA, Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham are set to lose out to American drug companies over the next five years, according to a report from a new pharmaceutical research firm.

Patent expiries on big-selling medicines and a failure to replace the lost sales with new blockbuster drugs means that European firms are forecast to supply only three of the world's 25 best-selling drugs by 2002. Ten years ago, the success of British industry leaders meant that European companies were responsible for half of the top 50.

Evaluate Pharma, a firm set up by Jonathan de Pass, former head of healthcare research at BZW, argues that US companies have read the market better, recognising the huge appeal to US consumers of drugs that ease the pain and burden of growing old.

in the new group, narrowly the world's biggest drugs company, traded for the first time yesterday, falling 91p to £29.46.

Dr McKillop said that he had set June 1 as the date to have the group operating as a single company. This will involve a wide-ranging shake-up of management responsibilities, the setting of new budgets and an integration of computer systems.

AstraZeneca is aiming to secure \$1.1 billion of annual cost savings from the merger over the next three years. Dr McKillop would not say how many of the group's 55,000 employees are expected to lose their jobs, but said it would be less than 10 per cent.

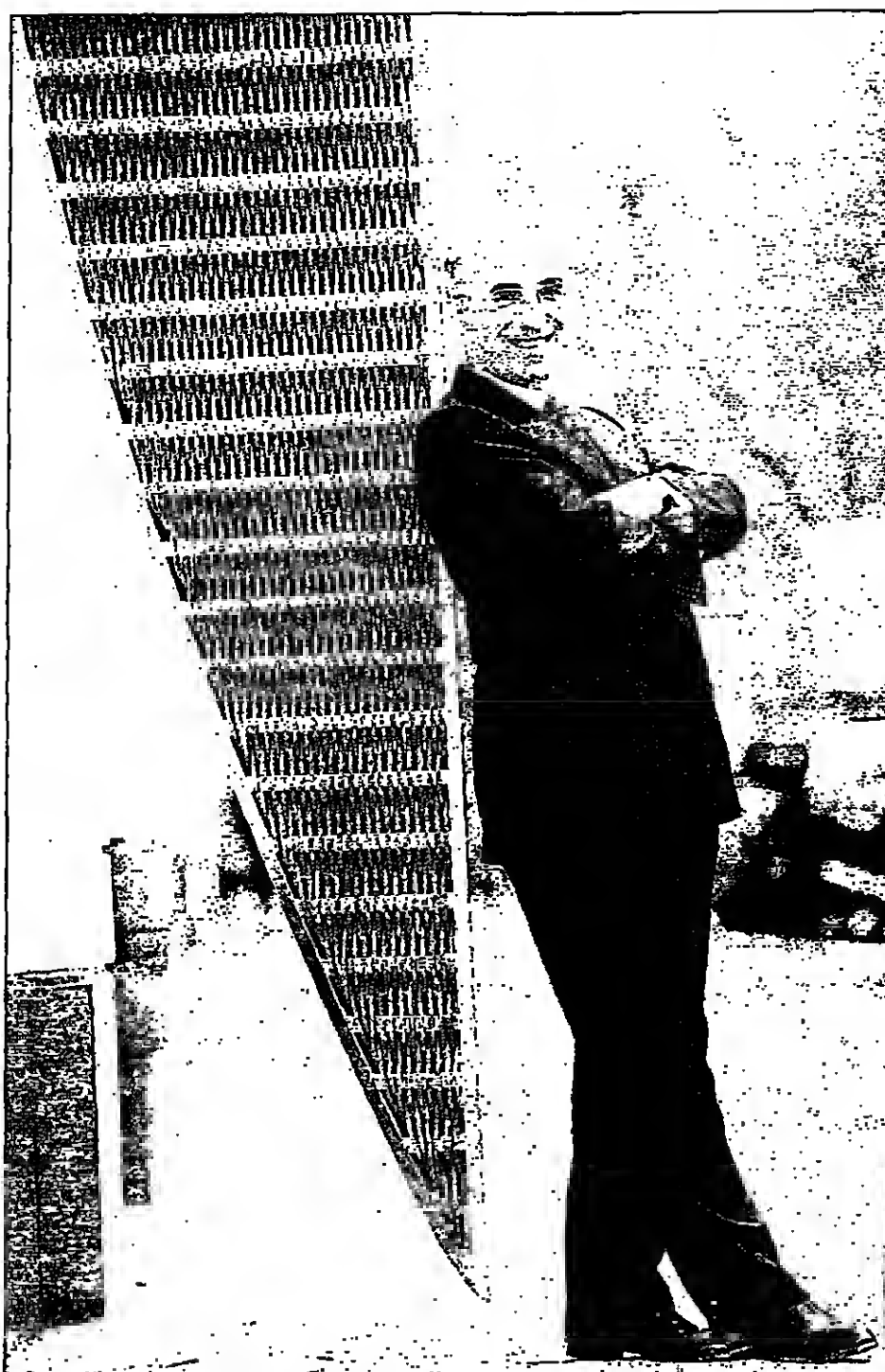
He said that the merger, announced in December "has been concluded in record time — 80 working days", which he described as a "tremendous performance".

Dr McKillop said that his priority after completing the integration was to tackle the threat to AstraZeneca's sales posed by the patent expiries on its two biggest sellers, Losec, the Astra ulcer drug that is the world's biggest-selling medicine, is expected to start to lose its protection against competitors from April 2001. Zestril, the Zeneca heart drug, will be vulnerable from mid-2002.

Dr McKillop said: "We have launched 12 products in recent years. We have got as many again scheduled for launch by 2001. We have got a very active in-licensing programme."

Zeneca's shares had been strong in the run-up to the formal completion of the merger, partly because of index funds seeking to increase their weight in the stock.

Tempus, page 26



Michael Marx outside Development Securities' Curzon Street site, which once housed M15

Developer reports progress

DEVELOPMENT Securities, the property company where Michael Marx is managing director, reported an increase of 61 per cent in pre-tax profit for the year to December 31, to £20 million, from £12.4 million last time (Saeed Shah writes).

Net asset value increased to

337p per share (279p) and earnings per share rose 59 per cent to 66.7p. The final dividend of 2.2p (2p) brings the yearly payout to 33p (3p).

Lord Gowrie, chairman, attributed the increase to its development programme, whereby impressive letting activity during 1998 was translated

into significant development gains. He also said that the company had benefited from substantial tax losses.

Lord Gowrie will hand over the chairmanship to Hugh Jenkins, previously an executive director of the Prudential Corporation, at May's annual meeting.

Evans to join up with Curnock Cook

By Paul Durman

TWO of the best-known figures in the UK biotechnology industry are joining forces to take over the running of the £57 million International Biotechnology Trust as NM Rothschild withdraws from the sector.

Jeremy Curnock Cook, head of the Rothschild Bioscience Unit, which has been managing the fund, will join Chris Evans, the founder of Chiroscience and Celis International, to form Merlin Bioscience. With about 25 people drawn from Dr Evans's Merlin Ventures team and key members of the RBU, the new firm claims it will be one of the world's largest bioscience investment specialists.

The deal will allow Mr Curnock Cook to continue the RBU's active involvement in the companies it backs — a policy seen to have hampered its freedom to sell out of problem companies. Mr Curnock Cook is chairman of Biocompables International, an IBT investment that was one of the most spectacular casualties of the slump in biotech share prices.

Dr Evans has also had problems. Celis has lost 80 per cent of its value in 18 months and tumbling valuations have forced Merlin to rethink the debt financing arrangements that previously allowed Dr Evans to take a quick profit on early stage investments.

Dr Evans said that he and Mr Curnock Cook, who will be chief executive of Merlin Bioscience, had learnt from their mistakes, particularly the importance of management.

Merlin, which is seeking to raise a £100 million fund, will also take on the management of RBU's Australian and Canadian biotech funds.

The RBU arose out of the late Victor Rothschild's enthusiasm for biotech. Rothschild is withdrawing from the sector after IBT's failure to agree a merger with Biotechnology Investments Limited, a larger offshore fund advised by the RBU.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

CBI in co-operation talks with BCC

THE CONFEDERATION OF BRITISH INDUSTRY and the British Chambers of Commerce have begun a series of talks on co-operation that could lead to a merger of the business organisations. While neither side expects a sudden merger, neither is ruling out the possibility. A fusion of the two would be the logical conclusion of their present efforts to boost their lobbying voice and pool their resources and expertise. The two groups share views and concerns on a number of policy areas including regional work and help for small businesses. Both are strong supporters of the European single currency. Co-operation on these issues would give both parties a stronger voice in dealings with the Government and other organisations.

The CBI is regarded as the representative of big business with 170 trade association members and 2,500 direct members, while the BCC is seen as the voice of smaller companies with 120,000 members. Talks between Adair Turner, Director-General of the CBI, and Chris Humphries, Director-General of the BCC, come as Mr Turner prepares to quit his post at the end of this year.

House prices rise

CONFIDENCE is returning to the property market with house prices rising by 1.2 per cent in March, according to new figures from the Halifax. The increase, which brings annual house price inflation to 4.4 per cent, is the latest sign that the housing market is recovering from its winter gloom after a series of recent interest rate cuts. The bank said last month's rise offset the 1 per cent fall in house prices between October 1998 and February 1999. House prices fell by 0.6 per cent in February, marking the third fall in four months.

Backing for Moorfield

MOORFIELD ESTATES, the property minnow, has secured the backing of the secretive Barclay brothers for its £392 million purchase of a property portfolio from Royal & Sun Alliance, the insurer. The company yesterday gave details of the deal: it is being funded via a limited partnership, Moorfield Capital Partners, in which the company has invested £12 million for a 24 per cent stake. Moorfield's three executive directors will own 4 per cent, while 72 per cent is controlled by Ellerman Investments, a company owned by David and Frederick Barclay.

Henry J Bean's sold

CAPITAL RADIO, which acquired the My Kinda Town restaurant group in 1996, has sold its Henry J Bean's chain for £2.4 million to a management buyout team backed by Proven Private Equity. The deal, led by Douglas Smillie, head of Capital's international restaurant operations, includes two directly owned Henry J Bean's outlets in London and Bristol and 18 franchises, including Edinburgh, York, Beijing, Beirut and Bangkok. Mr Smillie said that his new company, the Henry J Bean's Group, would continue to expand overseas through franchise deals.

JSB in software buy

JSB Software Technologies, an Internet access management specialist, yesterday announced the acquisition of Kansmen, a software company based in California, for a maximum of \$5 million (£3.1 million). The company also announced that it was raising £5 million, net of expenses, by way of an institutional placing and open offer. The additional funds will be used to finance the Kansmen purchase and to invest in supporting and developing its existing products. Kansmen had turnover of \$1.3 million for the year ended December 31, 1998.

Navy chooses Flagship

FLAGSHIP TRAINING, a Vosper Thornycroft joint venture company, said that it has won a 20-year £180 million contract to design, build and operate firefighting training units for the Royal Navy. Under the contract, awarded by the Naval Recruiting and Training Agency, two new state-of-the-art firefighting facilities will be built for the Navy in Plymouth and in Portsmouth, while a unit in Strathclyde will be modified. It is understood to be the first big contract awarded by the Ministry of Defence under the Private Finance Initiative.

Caradon in US sale

CARADON, the builder's merchants group, said yesterday that it has finally completed its disposal programme announced six months ago. It reported that it has sold three remaining North American doors and windows businesses — Peachtree, Thermal-Gard and Caradon Doors and Windows (Canada) for \$66 million (£41 million). The three businesses, which have been bought by Nortek, last year made operating profits of £5.4 million. The deals mean that since September Caradon has sold ten businesses for a total of £134 million.

Grafton acquisition

GRAFTON GROUP, the building supplies group, yesterday announced that it has acquired Niall Bailey, a builder's merchant trading in the Birmingham area, for £13.5 million in cash, funded from the group's existing resources. Niall Bailey trades from six branches and the acquisition brings Grafton's presence in the Midlands to 29 branches. Niall Bailey had a pre-tax profit of £380,000 for the year to January 31 on turnover of £13.6 million. Grafton now operates from 85 locations, mainly in the South East and Midlands.

Balfour wins contract

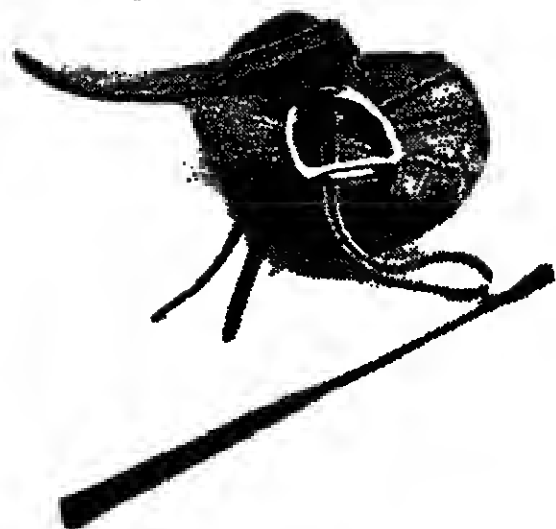
BALFOUR BEATTY MAJOR PROJECTS, a subsidiary of BICC, said yesterday that it has been awarded a £75 million contract by Union Railways for the construction of the easternmost 16-kilometre sector of the Channel Tunnel rail link from Ashford to the tunnel at Folkestone. The section is being constructed alongside the current Ashford to Folkestone line. Balfour Beatty is currently the preferred bidder for the £200 million West Coast Main Line electrification contract.

EXCHANGE RATES

	Bank	Bank
	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	1.63	1.65
Austria Sch.	21.39	19.73
Belgium Fr.	66.66	66.66
Canada C.	2.512	2.524
Cyprus Cyp L	0.9006	0.8991
Denmark Kr.	11.48	11.48
Finland Mk.	5.94	5.94
France Fr.	136.5	136.5
Germany DM	3.375	3.375
Greece Dr.	340	340
Hong Kong \$	7.75	7.75
India Rupee	47.5	47.5
Indonesia Rp.	1745	1745
Ireland P.	1.224	1.224
Israel Sh.	1.75	1.75
Italy Lira	3044	3044
Japan Yen	207.05	207.05
Malta L.	0.672	0.672
Netherlands Gld	3.486	3.486
New Zealand \$	3.14	3.14
Norway Kr.	12.48	12.48
Portugal Esc.	200.48	200.48
S Africa Rd	10.46	10.46
Spain Ptas	200.48	200.48
Sweden Kr.	10.46	10.46
Switzerland Fr.	2.05	2.05
Turkey Lira	1.95	1.95
USA \$	1.63	1.65

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Interest rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

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Dun & Bradstreet

AEA given share boost by MoD

AEA Technology, still feeling bruised after the share price collapse that followed its recent profit warning, has won a £26 million contract to help to ensure the safety of the reactors in Britain's nuclear submarines.

The company will advise the Ministry of Defence and its new internal regulator on the safe operation and maintenance of reactors in Trident and Hunter Killer submarines.

Two weeks ago, AEA's shares lost 40 per cent of their value in one day when it warned investors of weakening demand for its engineering software and energy consultancy business. At 343p, the shares are a third of the value they raced to after the business was privatised in 1996.

Marketing lift for SkyePharma

By Paul Durman

SKYEPHARMA, the drug delivery company headed by Ian Gowrie-Smith, has won US marketing approval for a cancer drug acquired with its recent \$25.6 million purchase of DepoTech Corporation.

DepoCyt is an extended-release version of an off-patent drug used to treat dying patients who contract a form of meningitis that can accompany non-Hodgkins lymphoma. Peter Laing, analyst at SG Securities, said Chiron, which will sell the drug in the US, is looking for sales to reach \$50 million. He expects a similar level of sales in Europe, though DepoCyt has still to be filed with regulators.

Mr Laing said SkyePharma's deal with Chiron should

allow it to make annual profits of \$9 million from US sales by 2002, and another \$3 million of royalties from non-US sales. Michael Ashton, SkyePharma's chief executive, said DepoCyt offered patients an improved quality of life, reducing the number of injections they need. Marketing of the drug will trigger another payment to DepoTech's vendors.

Shares in SkyePharma rose 3p to 64p. They have been weak recently, partly because SmithKline Beecham has not revealed its plans for the version of Paxil, its big-selling antidepressant, that SkyePharma helped to develop. Eli Lilly also abandoned work on a promising heart drug on which SkyePharma was collaborating.

Italy expected to lead return of Western presence Oil companies look to Libya

By Carl Mortished, International Business Editor

LIBYA'S huge oil reserves could be the next prize for Western energy companies as the country slowly sheds its pariah status and begins to court foreign investment.

Only a day after the two Libyans accused of the Lockerbie bombing were sent to a court in The Netherlands, Italy's Foreign Minister was heading to Tripoli on the first flight since economic sanctions were imposed by the United Nations in 1992. His presence confirms the importance of Libya to Italy: ENI, the Italian oil company already has a large pres-

ence in the country; Italy is a big importer of Libyan crude and has ambitions to link Libya to Italy's gas network.

Other oil industry executives are certain to follow as airlines renew potentially lucrative traffic to the country. Western oilmen have had to take circuitous routes to the country, overland via Tunisia or by ship. They will soon flock there as they previously rushed to Iran when the US, last year, agreed to turn a blind eye to non-US investment in the country.

Libya has vast oil resources — some 30 billion barrels of

proven and recoverable reserves, twice the level of the UK and Norway's combined oil assets. But unlike the North Sea, Libya is underexploited, its oil production in decline and suffering from underinvestment. Lanza, the UK group headed by Joe Darby, has a big presence with a third interest in the Elephant field, which has proven reserves of 500 million barrels. Others active in Libya include Elf, of France, Repsol, of Spain, and Wintershall, part of Germany's BASF.



Darby: big presence

Lockerbie trial, page 10

Niche work if you can get it



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

An internet toy shop will shortly make its stock market debut with a valuation of more than \$1 billion. Never mind the multiple on earnings—there are none—the price is more than 45 times the company's total sales last year.

Clearly, it would be wrong to say that investors have lost their appetite for niche retailers. By comparison with the enthusiasm now being generated by eToys, the reception which greeted the launch of The Rack back in 1987 seems positively staid. The share issue, 85 times oversubscribed, was at least for a company with a profit record.

Admittedly, eToys is planning to play on the American stock market, but it might encounter a similarly rapturous welcome in the UK, such is the current enthusiasm for any stock with Internet connections. But niche retailing, whether on line or on station forecourts, has its limits.

The redoubtable Roy Bishko at least held out very much longer than Sophie Mirman, the Sock Shop founder. She found a niche and exploited it but did not know when to stop. Her expansion plans went far beyond the market she had found.

By their very nature, niches have limits. Even bored travellers do not have an insatiable appetite for Mickey Mouse ties and striped socks. The Rack had the ambitions of a big business when it is, essentially, a small one. And

small companies are no longer welcome on the stock exchange.

But there should still be backers for bright new retailers who can spot that elusive gap in the market. Trained eyes are currently focused on The Holding Company, the brainchild of an American woman whose enthusiasm for keeping things tidy inspired her to open a shop devoted to helping people to keep their things in order. So successful has the first branch been that THC is now developing into a chain. It could even be heading for an appearance on the World Wide Web.

It will take years before retailers can gauge how shoppers will divide their spending between the Web and the high street. The likelihood is that there will be room in the marketplace for both eToys and Toys'R'Us, but the newcomer has a very long way to go before it can rival the buying power of the market leader. And that brings us to the crucial issue of price.

Shoppers are more price-conscious than ever, on both sides of the Atlantic. They will not happily pay a premium to buy over the Web, despite the convenience that it offers. And the price charged by the virtual retailer has to take ac-

count of the cost of delivering the goods to the customer.

That factor could put a heavy burden on the Internet stores. Even Amazon.com, the fashionably unprofitable bookseller, demonstrates how margins suffer when books must travel.

Clever investors may find that, as ever, the real money will be made by the middle men. The distribution companies will be the first beneficiaries of e-commerce.

A victory for market forces

The battle for Kosovo has been a bizarre one by any standards. On the ground, the two sides have been operating on completely different battlefields with wholly disparate time horizons. In the financial markets, no one has been interested in gold, the traditional store of value in times of chaos. Yet shares have blithely broken

into new highs in New York and, eventually, in London.

Investors evidently feel that the whole thing is far too short-term to have any destabilising or inflationary effects beyond the Balkans. The threat of a no-confidence vote succeeding in the Indian Parliament and IMF officials' haggling with Russia are proving more price-sensitive.

Only the euro has truly suffered. Euroland's proximity to the killing fields may have something to do with it, along with the dollar's safe haven status, especially for Americans. But traders just love any excuse to kick a currency when it is down.

The pragmatic, unsentimental, market view yesterday was therefore different to that of Nato. Serbia's Easter "ceasefire" was the reality on the ground and spelt the beginning of the end of this conflict, regardless of Nato's aims or the fate of the Kosovars. So euros bounced back against the dollar and trod on the pound.

The old man in the middle of the road. The euro's post-launch debacle is not over yet but if and when it concludes, sterling may find all the bullies pointing at it and gilded prices under pressure.

Meanwhile, there seems nothing to stop shares rising. London's FTSE 100 index would in any case have reacted yesterday to its twin's advance in New York late on Maundy Thursday. Over Easter weekend, there was more short-term good news as tens of thousands of savers rushed to buy last-minute personal equity plans while stocks lasted. Most of that money will have to go straight into UK equities.

The pep infuse was a reminder of a more potent force. Liquidity in pension funds remains high, a relic of the autumn 1998 correction that stopped the share index improving on its July 1998 peak until about six weeks ago.

Share ratings are already dizzyly high by historical standards as well as in relation to extremely

dull profit trends. The only force likely to cause another massive "correction" is a rise in short-term interest rates. The US Federal Reserve is doing its best to hold off. But the bad news for market is eventually more likely to come from a loss of nerve in Washington than in Belgrade.

Quiet man is the big noise at C&W

When Graham Wallace took over from Dick Brown at Cable & Wireless, he did not relinquish all interest in his former role. Since C&W continues to hold 53 per cent of Cable & Wireless Communications, Mr Wallace still has some sway over what goes on there. In fact, the profile of Greg Clarke, his successor as chief executive at CWC, has been so low that one might assume Mr Wallace is still running the show, and continuing to negotiate the deal with Telewest which he had on his wish list last year.

But Mr Wallace's plans go far beyond that sensible merger. Dynamic Dick Brown led the first wave of restructuring at C&W but there is much further to go. Quiet,

understated Graham Wallace may be the man to create a C&W which can grab its share of the glamour ratings in which most of the telecoms sector now basks.

Deal-hungry bankers are besieging him with complicated plans. Mr Wallace may be wary: after all, he is now having to ask the courts to help him to sort out C&W's \$1.75 billion Internet purchase from the sharp shooters at MCI. So why not just opt for the easy ways of demonstrating C&W's attractions? Float mobile phone operator One2One; sell down the stakes in Hong Kong Telecom and Optus, and, perhaps, in CWC.

That should make clear that investors are currently getting the rest of C&W for a song. Mr Wallace is running up to take the company into the hit parade.

Monumental struggle

No sooner do Enterprise Oil and Lasso stop talking about how they might engineer a friendly get-together than they find themselves at odds. Monumental Oil is the cause. Tim Eggar has but a negligible stake in the firm but the former Tory energy minister may still find his political skills of use in playing one potential bidder off against another. Who would have emerged as chief executive in a merged L'Enterprise is unclear but now Pierre Jungels and Joe Darby have the chance to show their strengths.

Jarvis shares hit after warning on cost of strikes

By ROBERT LEA

JARVIS, the rail and roads maintenance group said yesterday that months of industrial action by members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT) should soon end.

But it said the intermittent strikes would result in profits for the past financial year falling short of City forecasts. After the warning the shares fell nearly 12 per cent yesterday.

Jarvis, which has expanded rapidly over the past three years to account for the maintenance of a fifth of the UK rail network, said yesterday that a new pay and conditions deal had been thrashed out. It said RMT members would vote on the new deal in the next three weeks and that the proposals would carry a recommendation from the RMT executive.

The deal is, according to Henry Lafferty, Jarvis finance director, "ground-breaking after decades of little change in working arrangements".

It means that night-time and weekend working will no longer be classed as overtime but that RMT members will now receive a higher basic rate of pay. Mr Lafferty said its traditionally lower-paid

workers would not now have to put in extra time to make up their pay packets and that they would be able to achieve the same levels of income from being on duty fewer hours.

On the flip-side, said Mr Lafferty, this would give the company greater flexibility in overnight and weekend rostering.

However, the prolonged industrial action over changes in working practices, which had been going on since last June, will take the shine off Jarvis's results for the year to March 31.

Announcing that the results will not meet market expecta-

tions, Paris Moayed, chief executive, said: "It would be unrealistic to assume that such a fundamental overhaul of working practices could have been achieved without some tension between the parties."

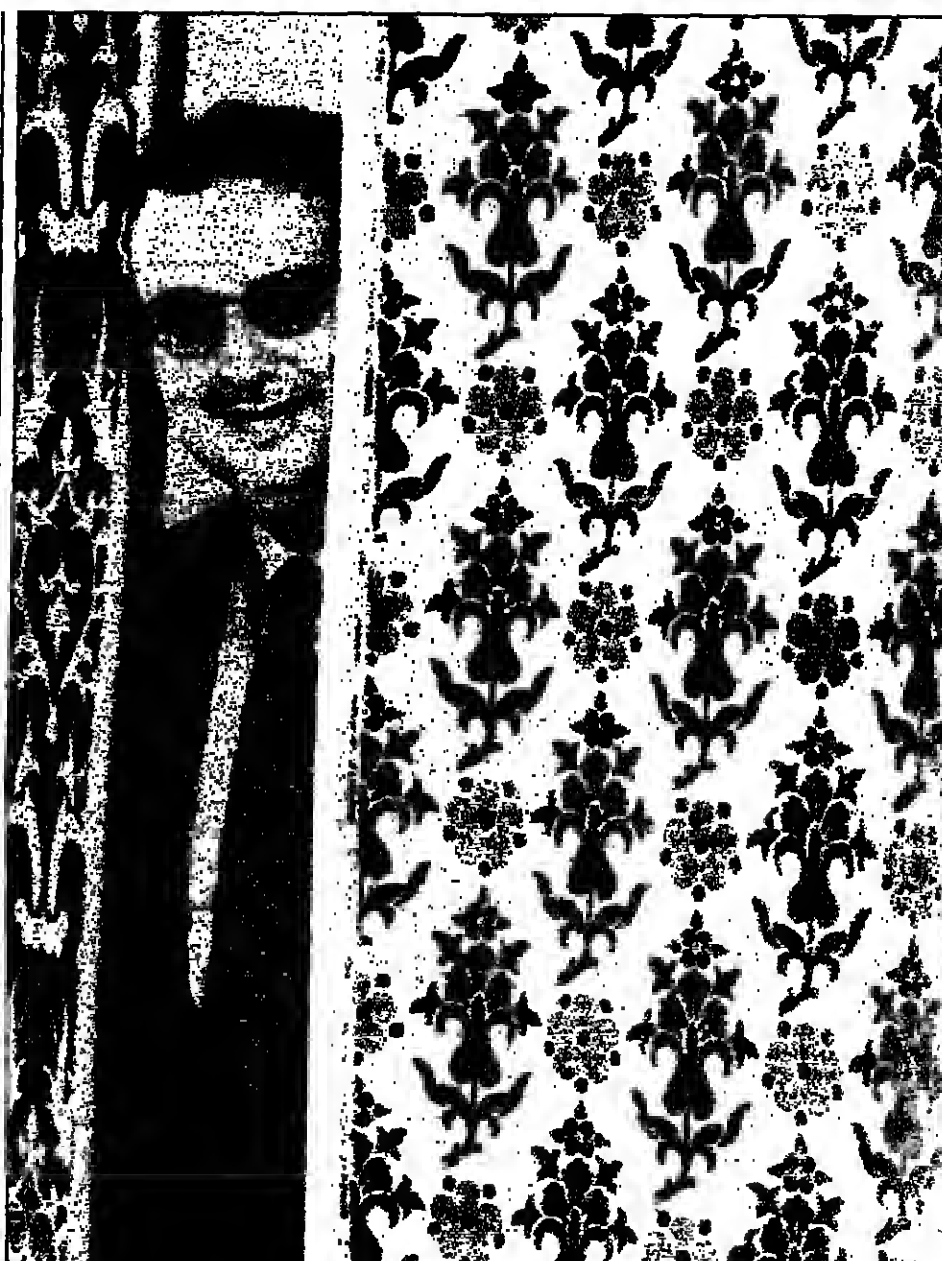
He said: "During the industrial action, Jarvis Rail took strong action to ensure that the company maintained its services. Inevitably, however, the cost of implementing this action had an adverse effect on the company's operating results. This was compounded by the wholly unrelated and well-publicised decision by Railtrack to defer certain renewal activities while the criteria which should be applied to renewals decisions were reviewed."

Peel Hunt, the broker, immediately cuts its pre-tax profit forecast for the year to £56 million from £62.7 million. Although the company said the problems it had highlighted affected only the past financial year, Peel Hunt pulled back its forecasts for the current year to £77 million from £80 million. Jarvis shares closed down 64½p at 478p.

Tempus, page 26



Moayed: "strong action"



Papering over the cracks: Aidan Connolly expressed confidence in an upturn this year

Greenbank profits fall in wake of disposals

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

WALKER GREENBANK, the company that supplied the infamously expensive wallpaper for the refurbished residence of Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor, saw its profits more than halve last year after the disposal of some operations.

Pre-tax profits, excluding exceptional items, in the year to January 31 fell to £3.4 million from £7.8 million. Sales were down 4 per cent to £52.4 million. The company made an exceptional profit of £29.7 million on the sale of its commercial wallcoverings businesses.

The company admitted that the policy of buying up distribution rights in continental countries had "proved to be an expensive mistake".

But Aidan Connolly, chief executive, said that while market conditions remained difficult, especially in Europe, the company was "looking forward to a considerable improvement this year".

He said that sales were running ahead of the same time last year, with two of the businesses, Zoffany and Harlequin, already returned to profit. The company will pay a final dividend of 2p (3.4p). It did not pay any interim, so the full-year payout will be 2p (3.7p).

Tempus, page 26

Cleveland backs cash bid from Ashtenne

By SAIED SHAH

ASHTENNE HOLDINGS, the industrial property investment company, has made a recommended cash offer for Cleveland Trust, a property company with a similar portfolio. At 111p per Cleveland share, the offer values Cleveland at £33 million.

The offer represents a premium of about 47 per cent to the closing middle-market price of 75½p per Cleveland share on September 9, 1998, the last dealing day prior to the announcement by Cleveland that Trefick had acquired a 5.49 per cent holding in the company. Trefick an Isle of Man investment vehicle holds a 14 per cent stake in Ashtenne and has built up a 28 per cent stake in Cleveland.

The purchase will be financed from Ashtenne's existing resources. Ashtenne said its acquisition of Cleveland is in line with its strategy to increase its industrial holdings in the UK.

Cleveland, which owns and operates the port of Boston in Lincolnshire, reported pre-tax profits of £1.3 million (£997,000) on turnover of £5 million (£4.3 million) for the six months to September 30, 1998. Net assets were £33 million, with asset value per share at 110.5p, compared with 106.6p last time.

News Corp finalises deals

FROM ANDREW BUTCHER IN NEW YORK

TWO deals yesterday gave The News Corporation an increased presence in US cable sports and entertainment broadcasting and added to the media group's list of leading shareholders.

In the first deal, News Corp moved to full ownership of the Fox/Liberty Networks, buying out its 50 per cent partner, Liberty Media Group, the AT&T subsidiary which is run by John Malone.

Liberty's stake in the cable group, which is focused on

the Fox Sports Net and FX entertainment channels, was exchanged for \$1.425 billion (£900 million) of News Corp shares. The deal represents about 5 per cent of NewsCorp shares.

Rupert Murdoch, the chairman and chief executive officer of News Corp, said that the deal would give the company full control over one of its fastest growing sources of revenue.

Mr Murdoch said: "As TV gets more fragmented, the

one thing that stands out is live-event broadcasts. It draws the large numbers. It's a very strong cornerstone for all our cable strategies."

The second deal involves News Corp buying back \$1.39 billion worth of shares acquired in 1995 by MCI WorldCom, the US long-distance telephone company.

News Corp will sell half the stake to Liberty for about \$700 million. Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal, the Saudi Arabian investor, will add to

his existing 5 per cent parcel of News Corp shares by buying a \$200 million slice of the MCI stake.

The two deals will give Liberty an 8 per cent stake in News Corp, making it the shareholder with the second-biggest stake. Only the Murdoch family owns more, controlling about 30 per cent of the company's shares.

News Corp owns News International, the company that owns The Times and several other UK media properties.

Annual figures 1998

- Strong net profit growth for 1998 to NLG 5,882 million (+21%).
- Profit per share rose by 19.2%.
- Dividend increased to NLG 2.75 (+19.6%).

(in millions of NLG/EUR***, except for amounts per share)	1997* NLG	1998 NLG	1997* EUR	1998 EUR	% change
Result before taxation:					
- insurance operations	3,620	5,351	1,643	2,428	47.3
- banking operations	2,989	2,371	1,356	1,976	-20.7
Net profit	4,861	5,882	2,206	2,669	21.0
Net profit per ordinary share	5.25**	6.26	2.38	2.84	19.2
Dividend per ordinary share	2.30	2.75	1.04	1.25	19.6
Total assets	620,400	876,306	281,525	394,925	40.3
Shareholders' equity	48,331	64,078	21,931	29,077	32.6

* Adjusted for the changes in the accounting principles:
- influence on published net profit +NLG 756 million/EUR 343 million
- influence on published shareholders' equity +NLG 2,213 million/EUR 1,004 million
** Published
*** EUR 1.00 = NLG 2.20371

Despite the turbulent conditions in the financial markets, ING Group closed the year 1998 with good results. All core activities contributed to the net profit increase, with the exception of the international corporate & investment banking activities. Especially the operations in the Benelux reported favourable results.

The total contribution of the acquired companies to net profit was NLG 1,359 million, after deduction of finance charges. These contributions were made by BBL (NLG 1,154 million), Equitable of Iowa (NLG 161 million) and Furman Selz (NLG 44 million).

Without non-recurring items of, on balance, NLG 1,247 million, the operational net profit amounted to NLG 4,635 million (+3.5%). The non-recurring items were the profits made on the sale of the non-life insurance operations in the US (NLG 833 million), Libertel (NLG 445 million), Kredietbank Belgium (NLG 377 million) and credit insurer NCM (NLG 53 million) as well as additions to special provisions for low interest rates outside the Netherlands (NLG 331 million) and the Millennium Calamity Fund (NLG 130 million).

The net profit from the insurance operations rose by 49.2% to NLG 4,247 million. Excluding the non-recurring items, the operational net profit amounted to NLG 3,600 million (+23.7%). Equitable of Iowa and higher sales results from equities, convertible bonds and real estate contributed to this increase.

The global financial crisis depressed the net profit from the banking operations, which decreased by 22.6% to NLG 1,635 million. Excluding non-recurring items, an operational net profit remained of NLG 1,035 million (-48.0%). This decrease can be entirely attributed to the non-recurring strong decline of the trading results and the extra additions to the debt provisions. The item Additions to the provision for loan losses of the banking operations increased by NLG 1,155 million to NLG 2 billion, of which NLG 1 billion related to Asia and Russia.

Assets under management went up by 45.3% to NLG 558 billion.

Due to the uncertain economic conditions in several important markets, the Executive Board considers it premature at this stage to make a firm profit forecast for 1999. However, ING Group has a strong financial and commercial foundation. Therefore the Executive Board faces the future with confidence.

ING GROUP

The annual report appears on 20 April 1999 and can be obtained at the following address:
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Banks call for universal Isa Catmark logo

By MARIANNE CURPHY

HIGH street banks, insurers and financial services companies are clubbing together to design a logo to help investors to spot which new individual savings account (Isa) carries a Catmark.

The logo could feature a cat's paw, a feline face or just a simple tick to denote that the savings product meets the necessary criteria laid down by the Treasury covering costs, access and terms.

A number of companies have already brought out prototype Catmarked products without having a common mark or logo and there is concern that investors will be confused.

Yesterday, on the first day that the new Isa was available, ten financial services companies said that they were draw-

ing up a shortlist of four Cat logos to be used across the industry.

Direct Line, b2, Fidelity, Legal & General, Marks & Spencer Financial Services, Royal & Sun Alliance, Scottish Widows, Sun Bank, Standard Life and Virgin Direct are backing the plan. The Association of British Insurers (ABI) and the Association of Unit Trust and Investment Funds (AUIF) are also taking part.

Di Skidmore, of b2, said: "We have seen a plethora of marketing logos for Cat standard products and we wanted to design a common logo which would be widely recognised." The Financial Services Authority said it had no objection to the plan provided the logo kept within its advertising rules.

The lessons of base rate neutrality



Clarke, then Chancellor, set rates at 5.25 per cent. It is now on impossible to believe that during these six years monetary policy has been expansionary for just seven months.

The Bank's projections of GDP growth on a scenario of rates remaining unchanged at 5.5 per cent. Far from remaining flat, the central path sees the economy gathering steam from an annual rate of expansion of 1 per cent this year to a pace approaching 3 per cent in early 2001. This reinforces our view that the current level of interest rates is generous rather than neutral.

There are two implications of this analysis. First, it should be remembered that current economic circumstances are far from normal and that the reason for rates being as low as they are is to counteract an extraordinary set of deflationary economic shocks. In the near term, interest rates are likely to be brought down again. But at some point, when the economy has begun to stage a more convincing recovery, they will probably need to rise to keep a lid on growth and prevent the build-up of inflationary pressures. This contradicts the often heard view that argues that rates will continue on their downward path over the next couple of years.

Secondly, there is the issue of the UK's membership of the single currency. For sterling to enter safely, the Government recognises that Britain's business cycle must converge with that of the eurozone. This, of course, is true, but to use another piece of jargon, this condition is necessary but not sufficient. With just one stance of monetary policy applying over the euro area, it is critical that the neutral levels of interest rates in the UK and the core eurozone economies are similar. If they are not, then

rates could be acting as a restraint on, say, the German economy while simultaneously creating a boom at home. We would argue that the UK's neutral rate currently lies above that in Germany, partly because of higher inflation, and if this does not change, the UK's participation in EMU could be fraught with difficulties.

Note here the dangerously rapid growth of the Irish economy, made worse by the cuts in rates before it joined the single currency. Over the next three to four years, it is possible that UK inflation and expectations of inflation, are squeezed relative to those in the eurozone. In these circumstances, the neutral rate of interest would fall and help the UK on to the path of convergence. But there is no guarantee that this will occur naturally and the assumption that it will seems to signify the triumph of hope over experience.

Philip Shaw is Chief Economist at Investec in London.

The concept of the neutral rate of interest has been making a frequent appearance recently in the debate over UK monetary policy. For interested onlookers this trendy piece of economics is inherently attractive. It does not owe its origins to complex economic theory and can be explained easily in layman's terms as follows.

Interest rates are said to be at their "neutral" level when they neither add to nor subtract from the level of economic growth. At least, in principle, this has implications for policymakers. As a rule of thumb, base rates should be below their neutral level when the authorities wish to stimulate the pace of activity. Conversely, they should be above it when the economy is required to cool down.

Where the simplicity of this notion breaks down is in assessing where the neutral rate actually is. There is no firm consensus among economists. Minutes from recent Monetary Policy Committee meet-

ings suggested that neutrality could lie in a range somewhere between 4.5 per cent to 6.5 per cent, hardly a definitive guide towards deciding where to set interest rates. A growing view though, and one expressed by at least one member of the MPC, is that neutrality is represented by base rates at about 5.5 per cent. The inference is therefore that monetary policy is currently neutral.

This begs the question: if the current stance of monetary policy is neutral, then why is it? The economy is virtually at a standstill with domestic and international factors continuing to pose risks to the downside. Fiscal policy is arguably expansionary, but only mildly so. Moreover, from industry's point of view, sterling is unhelpfully strong. Put plainly, base rates

should be at a level that encourages more growth. In the absence of a sudden improvement in economic prospects, this leaves two possibilities. Either rates have significantly further to fall or else the neutral rate is actually higher than 5.5 per cent. We think the latter is the case. Our estimate of neutrality is between 6 per cent and 6.5 per cent, consistent with the average for base rates since the publication of the Bank of England's first *Inflation Report* in early 1993.

Looking at the range of interest rates since then reveals an interesting story. Policy was clearly restrictive in June last year when rates were raised to 7.5 per cent. No argument here. But over the period, base rates have only been below 5.5 per cent between February and September 1994, when Kenneth

City reserves judgment in spite of mobile phone frenzy

Chris Ayres asks whether the rush for pre-pay deals flatters to deceive

Over the past six months, a staggering 4.3 million Britons have bought mobile phones. The evidence is everywhere: from train carriages filled with the din of one-way conversations, to classrooms where children send electronic messages to each other instead of listening to teachers. Wherever there is human life, it seems, the irritating electronic trill of a mobile phone is not far behind.

This growth has been accompanied by an enormous amount of corporate activity. Vodafone, Britain's largest mobile phone operator, is currently orchestrating a £67 billion merger with its American rival Airtouch, while One2One is preparing for an £11 billion flotation or sale. Meanwhile, British Telecom is considering whether or not to buy the 40 per cent of Cellnet it does not already own.

Yet there is evidence to suggest that the mobile phone industry is beginning to question the marketing play that has helped to provoke such super-charged growth. The play is "pre-pay": a means by which consumers can buy mobile phone handsets for as little as £69.99, then pay for calls in advance using vouchers costing between £5 and £50.

In Italy, pre-pay was seen as the only way to sell phones to a



Brazilian footballer Ronaldo proves there is no hiding from the trill of mobile phones as he keeps in touch even on the team bus

race which loves talking but hates signing pieces of paper. By abolishing contracts and asking customers to pay for calls in advance, Italy's mobile phone operators stumbled upon one of the 20th century's most effective marketing initiatives. Now, nearly 40 per cent of Italians own a mobile phone.

Pre-pay caught on Britain last year and has since opened up the mobile phone market to millions of consumers who previously felt they could not afford it. Parents have been able to buy their children phones without worrying about huge bills, and consumers with bad credit histories have also been able to take the plunge. The

craze for mobile phones was fuelled by high street retailers such as Tesco and Boots stocking the products.

At present, only about 25 per cent of Britons own a mobile phone, but many believe this will double within the next two years. As Alan Lyons, a telecoms analyst at ABN Amro, says: "Mobile phones are clearly going to achieve mass market penetration in the same way that television sets and video recorders have. Everyone will have one."

The percentage of mobile phone users now taking advantage of pre-pay services is astonishing. About 32 per cent of Vodafone's customers are using

pre-pay services, compared with just 5.6 per cent last year. Meanwhile, 40 per cent of One2One's customers are using pre-pay, up from 8 per cent last year.

Although the City has reacted positively to the number of customers attracted by pre-pay, it remains uneasy about just how much money they will spend. Industry analysts are also concerned about Britain's army of new mobile phone users abandoning their products when they realise how much they cost to run.

Other questions have been raised over the ability of mobile phones companies to cope with pre-pay's massive suc-

cess. Vodafone admits that its call centres nearly went into meltdown after being bombarded by calls from pre-pay customers, while customers of Orange have had to put up with 30-minute delays before being connected to the company's customer service staff.

Mr Lyons admits that pre-pay customers are "clearly not as profitable" as contract customers. But he adds: "Of course I would prefer that we could get the current growth rates without pre-pay. But without pre-pay we would be moving up the penetration curve much more slowly."

Not everyone is so optimistic. Mobile phone retailers

have seen their margins slashed by up to 40 per cent because of pre-pay phones. Simon Jordan, the brash co-founder of the PocketPhone Shop, which has more than 120 outlets throughout Britain, says: "Pre-pay is massive, but it's not controlled it could be dangerous. The network operators are getting big numbers of users, but the reality is that they are lower-return users."

He adds that, in his opinion, network operators are already trying to nudge potential customers away from pre-pay services by lowering the price of contracts. "You'll find that standard contracts will be reduced in price," he says. "Already, Vodafone has changed its cheapest contract from £17.99 a month to £14.99. You will see contracts below £10 a month by the end of this year."

According to most analysts, the success of pre-pay will not be decided until Vodafone and Orange publish financial results later this year. Even if analysts conclude that it is a good thing, mobile phone companies will have to work much harder for both their shareholders and customers to stay ahead. The final quarter figures of 1998 — which saw 2.5 million Britons buy mobile phones — caused many analysts to totally rethink their expectations for the sector.

There is now a feeling that there is little more that mobile phone companies can do to impress the City. And, given the huge amount of mobile phone company shares being issued around the world, even the City's enthusiasm for the likes of Vodafone and Orange is subtly waning. All of a sudden, gaining 4.5 million customers in just six months no longer seems such an impressive feat.

BUSINESS LETTERS

Consumer choice beaten by companies' financial muscle

From Mr David Morgan

Sir, Your lead article of March 24 on the subject of Britain's supermarket operators commented upon the recommendation that "when judging planning applications, local authorities should be asked to bear in mind consumer choice". If only authorities had the luxury of being able to consider this and other relevant criteria, such as local need, the opinions of local residents and the impact of the granting of such applications on local services, to say nothing of traffic flow, congestion and environmental issues.

All of these unfortunately give way to one simple question that local authorities ask themselves — if we turn down a planning application by a major group or company and the matter goes to appeal, how much will it cost us if we lose? All other criteria, particularly the merit of the application and the feelings of local residents, are ignored. Pragmatism rules the day!

Cash-strapped local authorities just do not have the will or the resources to fight the commercial giants over planning applications and such large concerns know that they only have to whisper the words "appeal with costs" in the ear of any hard-pressed

planning officer and the authority will inevitably roll over and meekly grant the application, often in the face of vociferous local opposition.

This has happened in Guildford where a large supermarket group has been granted permission to add a petrol station on its site, 300 yards away from another operator. No matter that local residents opposed the application, or that there was clearly no local need for such a facility. The local council judged that it was a waste of their limited financial resources and council taxpayers' money to oppose the application and lose the subsequent appeal, with the subsequent attendant costs. So much for local democracy!

Surely there has to be a better system of considering planning applications so that local authorities are not penalised financially by monstrous appeal costs, which more fairly should be at least shared between the parties rather than heaped upon the local residents through their council tax.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID J. A. MORGAN,
Pathways,
8a Downsway,
Guildford,
GU1 2YA.

B&B demonstrates cavalier attitude

From Mr Keith Chambers

Sir, A letter from the chairman of the Bradford & Bingley Building Society has gone out attached to a voting form.

It begs the question by commencing: "A small group of members want (sic) your building society to become a bank."

What it should have said is that a requisite number of members to propose a motion has called for a vote to see whether the membership as a whole wants the society to convert: the numbers of those either for or against conversion are surely not yet known — hence the vote.

By manipulating language

along the lines of "someone has stolen next year's election results", building society directors have once again shown a cavalier attitude towards members — their employers — and have surely weakened any case they wish to make.

Perhaps they will now have the courage of their convictions and promise that, should a society convert, they will themselves refuse to accept any so-called windfall payout. Yours faithfully,
KEITH CHAMBERS,
19 Hill Road,
Oakley,
Basingstoke,
Hampshire,
RG23 7HS.

HOW THE PHONE GIANTS GREW

COMPANY	Net new UK customers Q1 1999	Increase on number of net new customers gained during Q1 1998	Total new customers now	Percentage on pre-pay
VODAFONE	700,000	307%	5.57m	32%
CELLNET	479,000	444%	4.5m	20%
ORANGE	370,000	216%	2.5m	29%
ONE2ONE	329,000	79%	2.25m	40%

Although in some cases customers should pay pre-pay mobile phone packages, in many cases they should not. The example below shows how if you spend only two hours a month talking on a mobile phone, you could end up paying more by opting for a pre-pay mobile phone than by signing up to a contract.

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Cost of calls per minute, using the Orange network: 20p (using £5, £10 or £15 call vouchers)

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CONTRACT (typically 12 months):

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For the Motorola V3688

Connection cost: one-off payment of £35

Monthly fee: rental of Talk 60 plan: £29.28

Cost of calls: 60 minutes worth of free calls included in the Orange Talk 60 plan. Then prices range from 5p a minute to 20p a minute depending on time and type of call.

Total cost of calls per month: £47.28

Source: The Corporate Warehouse April 99 (Bayer's Blade)

Pru's package

THREE years ago Sir Peter Davis was at the centre of a little spat. The Pru chief executive was highlighted by some investors as the main beneficiary of a long-term incentive plan, which they thought breached the guidelines set for these schemes. This was particularly embarrassing for the Pru as its own Hugh Jones was chairman of the Association of British Insurers' investment committee.

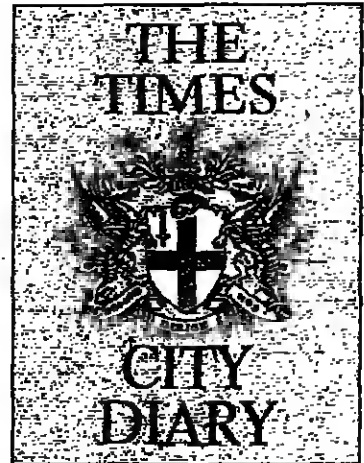
Ultimately, good sense prevailed

and the scheme was approved. Now, according to the Pru annual report, the scheme has paid out, giving Sir Peter £812,000 worth of shares, making a total package for 1998 of £1.71 million, including pension. And worth every penny he is, too.

SIR TOM FARMER is a man known for his charity — he does bankroll *Hibernian* football club. So when he decided to launch a Kosov appeal through his Kwik Fit chain, there were no half measures. Despite the campaign being launched only on Sunday, Sir Tom has already raised £1.5 million. 5,000 bags of clothing and 7,000 cans of food. The first shipment goes out today. You can't shift quicker than a Kwik Fit shipper, as one might say.

Golden Eyes

GERALD RICHARDSON, the entrepreneur who sold his pub and table dancing company to SEI Group two years ago, is back in business. Or strictly speaking, his wife Anne and three other members of his family are back in business. As Mr Richardson himself, who stayed on at SEI until last year to oversee the For Your Eyes Only table dancing opera-



member and is prevented from setting up in competition.

His wife is to open a new chain of strip joints — sorry, table dancing venues — called Golden Eyes, with a site already earmarked close to Heathrow. Although this does not break the terms of his contract, I understand that Tony Hill, the SEI boss, is none too pleased. But Mr Richardson tells me: "It's nothing to do with me what my family do. My wife is an independent, strong-willed woman."

SO FARAWELL Roy Bishko, who always moaned about *The Rack* being called a niche retailer. What's in a name, he laments: "If Karl Marx had not come up with the word communism, I'd have been a lot better

Solar suspense

TRAVELLERS to Cornwall know there are only two routes into the county. One is across Bodmin moor and the other is over the Tamar Suspension Bridge. So it is with some concern that I report that Kvaerner, the accident-prone Norwegian builder, has signed a £24 million deal to widen the bridge in time for the millennium.

But isn't there an even more significant event occurring in Cornwall before then — August's solar eclipse. My man in the hard hat assures me that the work will not even close one lane of the bridge during peak hours. So if you are stuck in a 20-mile tail-back, you know who to blame.

JASON NISSE

city.diary@the-times.co.uk

AG BARR has trod on a few corns while promoting its undrinkable soft drink, *Im-Bru*. Its advert, featuring a cow saying: "When I'm a burger I want to be washed down with Im-Bru", led the Advertising Standards Authority's list of most complained about ads of 1998. A total of 589 people objected, 418 more than the next most objectionable — a TCP advert featuring a man being eaten by a tiger. The ASA did not uphold any of the complaints.

Foster's face

TALKING about Caledonian refreshment companies, Scottish Courage will today reveal the new face of Foster's lager. In the past the brewer —

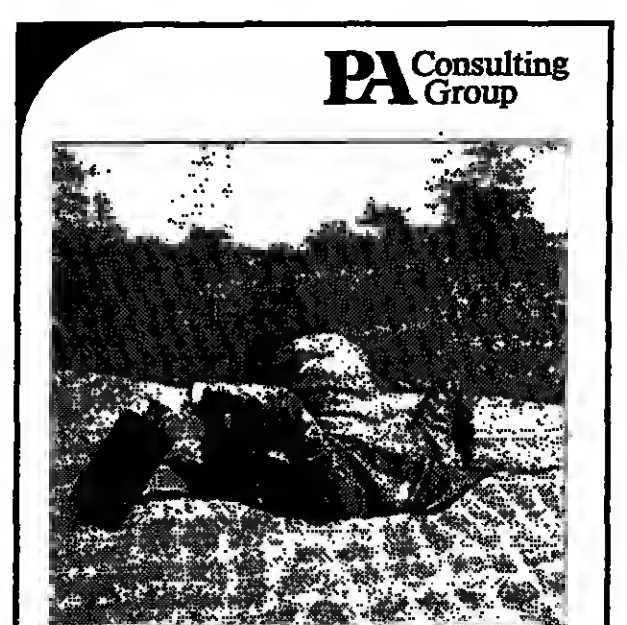
ber Nectar — hired the former presenter of Channel 4's *The Big Breakfast*, Denise van Outen, as its first Foster's "ambassador", followed by Kelly Brook, who then succeeded Ms van Outen at *The Big Breakfast*. The new Foster's face will be announced with a massive promotion, which will send 350 Foster's drinkers to Sydney for the millennium. I am sworn to secrecy as to who she is, but if you were to guess that she is Australian, is the younger sister of a supermodel and was the unwitting star of an infamous home video in her home country, you might not be a million miles from the truth.



Kelly Brook has been a



"Look dear. He's just said



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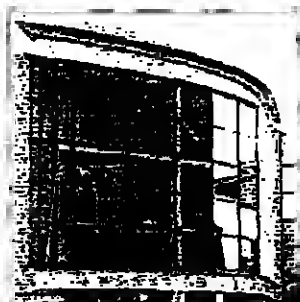
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VISUAL ART
An impressive
new gallery for
Scotland
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THE TIMES ARTS

FILM

Subjects too
hot for
Hollywood?

PAGE 34



A chance to be perfectly Candide

THEATRE:

Stephen
Sondheim tells
Michael Owen
why he is
helping to
restage Bernstein

When Leonard Bernstein's musical *Candide* was on its pre-Broadway try-out in Boston in 1956, the show was in trouble. The creative team, including the director Sir Tyrone Guthrie and the playwright Lillian Hellman, who wrote the book, looked impressive on paper but their contributions were refusing to gel. Bernstein sent for a young lyricist who was working with him on another project to offer his advice. It was Stephen Sondheim.

"I was 25, and supposed to tell people of the calibre of Guthrie and Hellman what they were doing wrong," he recalls, still awed at the presumptuous role he had been invited to fulfil.

Bernstein was still drafting in new songs as the production approached its Broadway first night — and they sounded familiar to Sondheim. The composer had been working simultaneously on *Candide* and *West Side Story*, for which Sondheim had been hired to provide the lyrics. "Lennie was switching songs from one show to the other. They were flying all over the place."

One *Hond*, *One Heart* had been intended for *Candide* under the title of *One* but ended up in *West Side Story*: the melody of *Officer Krupke* was pinched from a *Candide* number called *Where Does It Get You in the End*; and another song called *Hoppy* We went



A pocket full of rhyme: lyricist Stephen Sondheim (left) has had a long and sometimes tortuous relationship with the various attempts to stage Leonard Bernstein's (right) musical adaptation of *Candide*

in the opposite direction, from *West Side Story* to *Candide*. But, despite all the activity, the show was not a success in New York and closed after just 73 performances. Sondheim says: "The reason was simple: the director, the book and the score had nothing to do with

each other. Hellman had written it as a black comedy. Lennie's score was basically pastiche and Guthrie had directed it like a wedding cake."

Sondheim now says he was reluctant to become involved in either show. "I was a young man and eager to get on with

my own music but Oscar Hammerstein said *West Side Story* was too good an opportunity to miss. He persuaded me. My suggestion for *Candide* was that Michael Flanders, of *Flanders and Swann*, should write the lyrics. He would have been perfect. But

he was wheelchair-bound and it became impossible."

Bernstein's show has since then enjoyed as picaresque a journey as Voltaire's eponymous hero and now, more than 40 years later, Sondheim is still active on the sidelines as the musical comes up for a radical reworking at the National Theatre under the director John Caird — "assisted by Trevor Nunn", as the credits have it.

It was Caird who secured the rights, persuaded the various estates involved to allow him to revise the show and sought new lyrics from the American songwriter Richard Wilbur, who worked on the original 1956 version, and one new set of lyrics from Sondheim. It was for a number called *Life is Happiness* indeed sung by Maximilian, the brother of *Candide*'s love, Cunegonde.

"I can't say it was fun," says Sondheim. "I didn't know all the nuances they were seeking

and I had a lot of questions but I didn't want to get involved in endless phone discussions and I couldn't get over there. But John Caird asked me to take a second look and I was happy to comply. My original version dwelt on the character's vanity but they wanted to bring out his aristocratic qualities. I could see the sense."

After its Broadway failure, *Candide* managed a short West End run, in which the title role was taken by Denis Quilley, who now plays the elderly Martin in the new revival. Bernstein continued working on the show: it played in various stock companies in America but had to wait until 1972 before it came back to wider public recognition.

That was when Hal Prince devised a ground-breaking production, first given in a studio at the Brooklyn Academy of Arts then transferring to Broadway as the hit of the season. The Voltaire original was

submitted to a celebratory, anarchic performance style. There was a new book by Hugh Wheeler and Sondheim was again re-engaged.

"That show was great. It was real fun. Hal asked me to do an opening number for him. The first thing I suggested was that he get Lennie's permission to use any of the tunes that had been written for the show but not used before. I ended up writing the lyrics for three new songs."

But Bernstein felt Prince's production, despite its public success, had drifted too far from his original intention. He increasingly felt it belonged in an opera house; he rescored it for operatic voices and it was staged by New York City Opera in 1982. Six years later Jonathan Miller directed it for Scottish Opera with a new libretto by the late John Wells. It also enjoyed a successful run at the Old Vic.

When Nunn and Caird embarked on their plan to create an ensemble company occupying the Olivier in a series of themed productions, they looked for a musical with something to say about contemporary life and chose *Candide* with the intention of restoring as much as possible of Voltaire's searching philosophy. Caird says: "*Candide* is a comedy with a serious moral theme about issues that are relevant today. We were looking for works that would make people ask what is the morality that helps you to live your life in a time of war, greed and

capitalism at the end of the 20th century. *Candide* fits the bill."

While Nunn concentrated on *Troilus* and *Cressida*, Caird picked up the reins on *Candide*. He has rewritten the book himself, reordered many of the songs, switching some from one character to another, built up some minor characters and given the show a stronger through-line.

He says: "This show has had a very chequered existence. I believe it has always been a series of wonderful numbers but without a lot of dramatic coherence. That's the area we are concentrating on."

Daniel Evans, who played Peter Pan, will be *Candide*: Simon Russell Beale is doubling as Pangloss and Voltaire himself, who has been brought in as narrator; Clive Rowe is Cacambo and Alex Kelly is Cunegonde.

On John Napier's multipurpose Olivier Theatre set, the production will not deploy lavish effects, and the new orchestrations, which do not require operatic calibre voices, will be played by an unseen 14-piece band.

Sondheim does not expect to see it until his visit in June as he is working on his own new musical, *Wise Guys*, which Sam Mendes will direct for a January opening on Broadway. "It's a small show but, like *Citizen Kane*, it is a birth-to-grave story following two legendary American brothers called Meisner who were born at the turn of the century."

● *Candide* opens at the National Theatre on Tuesday (0171-452 3000)

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GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament
RAYMOND PICKARD

Age: 16.

Profession: Actor.

Double whammy: Next week he adds two major credits to an already impressive CV. On Sunday night he plays the autistic son of ex-footballer Robson Green in *Rhinoceros*, a two-hour ITV drama. Three days later he makes his stage debut as Billy Casper, school-boy hero of *Kes*, at the West Yorkshire Playhouse.

What's the TV role? "My character in *Rhinoceros* accidentally gets on the wrong train and ends up alone in the Welsh mountains. Robson's always one step behind in trying to track me down."

Pure coincidence: "During filming, Robson and I were talking about great movies and he asked me if I'd seen the film of *Kes*. When I said no he promised to send it to me on video. Two days after the tape arrived my agent sent me the script for the stage version. What are the odds?"

Where did the road to *Kes* begin? "I grew up on Merseyside but went to Intake High School in Leeds because it had a good reputation for drama." A casting director visited the school in search of "a skinny kid with a Yorkshire accent" to play Linus Roache's streetwise little brother in the BBC wartime drama, *Seaforth*. "When they picked me I was so excited I went round telling everybody at the school — even my worst enemies."

How did he end up on *Auntie's Bloomers*? "In *Seaforth* there was a scene with me and this dog sitting on top of some sandbags. The dog's leash was around my wrist when somebody in the crew opened a packet of meat-flavoured crisps. The dog sniffed them and ran off, dragging me across the ground. They kept filming."

Where else has he appeared? In a US television version of *The Canterville Ghost*, and in the 1997 film *The Borrowers*.

What effect has all this shooting had on his education? "I used to have a private tutor but I've now left school. I might go back to college to take A levels, but for the moment I just want to keep on working and put some money away so that I can eventually fund myself through drama school."



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Sunday Times

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Sunday Telegraph

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gripping production...joyous'
Evening Standard

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VISUAL ART: Richard Cork on an installation that reinterprets *Vertigo* through its visceral music

Stumbling through the darkness of the Atlantis Gallery in East London, we suddenly discover that a precipitous drop separates us from the screen where Douglas Gordon's *Feature Film* is projected. Halted by a barrier, we stare down into the void below, and realise the aptness of the void below. For Gordon has decided to tackle Hitchcock's *Vertigo* in this, his first London exhibition since winning the Turner Prize three years ago. And the dizzying fear suffered by James Stewart, as he climbs a belltower in pursuit of the elusive Kim Novak, is echoed by the unease we feel on this lofty platform.

Our disorientation is increased by the images on the screen. Unlike his previous homage to Hitchcock, a 1993 tour de force called *24 Hour Psycho*, Gordon's new film contains no visible trace of *Vertigo* itself. He concentrates instead on James Conlon, the charismatic chief conductor of the Paris Opéra, conducting a performance of Bernard Herrmann's score for *Vertigo*. Gordon does not even offer a glimpse of the 100 musicians under Conlon's control. The face, arms and hands of the conductor are all we see, and they prove mesmerising in their own right.

Conlon responds to the heightened emotions animating Herrmann's score with athletic sensitivity. The sounds seem to run through his body with the force of an electrical discharge, reaching a climax in the quicksilver motion of fingers alert to every musical nuance. Even when the orchestra lapses into silence, during the periods when *Vertigo*'s manic story develops without Herrmann's aid, Conlon does not allow his involvement to lessen. Gordon's camera lingers on his face for a while, and the tears in the conductor's eyes show the depth of his engagement with the unfolding narrative.

As a result, Gordon succeeds in presenting an audacious alternative to the experience normally offered by *Vertigo*. In a conventional cinematic presentation, Herrmann's contribution is always subservient to the overall impact of Hitchcock's directorial vision. Audiences may even remain unaware of its exceptional potency, and give Hitchcock unqualified credit for *Vertigo*'s ability to sear the imagination. By slicing off Herrmann's work and holding it up for inspection, Gordon enables us to assess it with far greater clarity. And by showing how ardently Conlon responds to the score, the full extent of its capacity to ensnare us in *Vertigo*'s nightmarish convolutions is revealed.

Anyone familiar with Gordon's previous work will appreciate how his fascination with Conlon's movements relates to earlier concerns. Conlon's exclamatory manual gestures reminded me in particular of a short, disturbing work that Gordon based on a film showing a hand endlessly repeating the act of firing a gun. He called it *Trigger-Finger*, and the nervous it exposed is far removed from Conlon's infinitely supple responses. All the same, Gordon uses hands in both these contrasted works to disclose a surprising amount about the emotional condition of the men themselves.

Nor does he stop there. As we gaze down at the screen enlivened by Conlon's exertions, our eyes gradually notice another film flickering

Hand-eye co-ordination: James Conlon conducts the Paris Opéra orchestra in Bernard Herrmann's evocative score for *Vertigo*, from Douglas Gordon's *Feature Film*

Hitching a dizzy ride

at the far end of the vast Atlantis hall. A staircase half-hidden in the gloom enables us to descend. The distant film turns out to be *Vertigo* itself, far smaller in size and projected modestly on to a wall by equipment resting on the floor. The almost off-hand presentation suggests that Gordon intends it as a footnote to the principal offering. But once I started watching *Vertigo*, it would not let me go. My eyes kept moving between the two rival images, eager to follow Herrmann's narrative and yet determined to see how Conlon dealt with the music filling the entire gallery with its doomed Mahlerian disquiet.

Gordon makes the experience still more complex by robbing *Vertigo* of its dialogue. The actors mouth soundlessly at each other, just as they did in the films Hitchcock would have seen during his youth. But there is scant reliance on the melodramatic acting that so often fuelled silent movies. The absence of dialogue made me aware of Hitchcock's restraint as a director — Stewart and, supremely, Novak are for

the most part reined-in. Apart from scenes of high anxiety, like the dream sequence where Stewart is tortured by neurotic memory-flashes, the actors are notable for their stillness, their reluctance to rely on rhetorical flourishes of any kind.

In such a hushed context, where a substantial court scene reduces all its players to a notably underdramatic level, the return of the music has an extraordinary impact. At one point, after a bout of soundless conversation, Stewart re-enters a room in distress. Herrmann's score ambushes our senses, lending the actor's anguish an intensity it would not otherwise have attained.

Hitchcock may well have found his composer too emotionally effusive: there is undoubtedly a clash between Herrmann's unabashed late Romanticism and the understatement dictating so much of Hitchcock's visual style. Against the odds, though, an unlikely chemistry is established between the two men's approaches. Without Herr-

mann, Hitchcock might well look stilted at times. And short of Hitchcock's rigour, Herrmann could easily sound embarrassingly lush. When they come together, the fusion goes a long way towards explaining why *Vertigo* exerts such a compulsive, lingering hold over us.

Ultimately, however, Gordon's installation sustains our attention through the interplay between *Vertigo* and the film he has made. The longer I looked at Conlon conducting, the more I realised that he seemed to inhabit a Hitchcockian world. There is, for one thing, a strange resemblance sometimes between details of Conlon's frowning face and Anthony Perkins in *Psycho*.

Although he is manifestly in charge of an orchestra, Conlon becomes one of the characters in the complex, multilayered drama played out here. When Stewart's haunted face is caught in close-up, enmeshed within a spider's web at the height of the nightmare sequence, he looks utterly alone. Conlon likewise seems marooned in a nocturnal void during the moments when the camera

rests on his features for a while. He appears overcome by the same autumnal melancholy that afflicts Stewart in his futile search for the unattainable Novak. And Conlon's ability to identify so strongly with this sadness helps him to locate it in Herrmann's score, ensuring that the music is sometimes as overwhelmingly insistent as the Mahler soundtrack deployed by Visconti throughout *Death in Venice* — another film dominated by the doomed pursuit of a destructive infatuation.

Gordon does not make it easy to absorb the richness of the relationship between Hitchcock, Herrmann, Conlon and his own equally obsessive art. Only repeated viewings would disclose everything worth extracting from their interaction: and the absence of seating in this austere hall obliged me to end up squatting on the floor, swivelling from one screen to the next and back again in an attempt to absorb the array of competing images on offer. It is a strenuous experience, and yet the inordinate demands made by Gordon end up tallying with the or-

deal Stewart forces himself to undergo during the film.

All the disparate elements combine most arrestingly in the final minutes, when Stewart bullies Novak into ascending the tower one more time. The brutality of his struggle with her is surprising and then alarming. Herrmann's music responds to the challenge with hectic conviction, while Conlon attains a frenzy of gestures on the other screen. As Stewart goads Novak up the stairwell, the conductor's hands stab, claw, thrust and swoop through the inkiness in blurred white arcs of agitation. Conlon drives his orchestra onwards with the single-minded vehemence Hitchcock unleashed on his actors as they stagger to the top. They are all caught up in the same demented trajectory. And, nothing, not even the swift intervention of the nun who sounds the bell, can prevent the tragedy from ending in freefall.

Feature Film, an Artangel/Becky commission, is at the Atlantis Gallery, 146 Brick Lane, London, E1 (0171-536 6803) until May 3

Toasts and tears

The one day devoted to the arts and culture of Northern Ireland during the Barbican Irish festival *From The Heart* came at a pregnant moment on Easter Day, amid the knowledge that the peace process was about to enter a solemn week.

Yet with Tommy Makem heading the bill, it was never going to be a sombre occasion. The 66-year-old veteran began performing with the Clancy Brothers in the late 1950s and his style has changed little since. His jocular presence and mixture of sentimental songs such as *Wild Mountain Thyme* and drinking ditties such as *Nancy Whiskey* make him the archetypal stage Irishman and his act has gone down a storm with Irish-Americans for decades. Here his comic patter seemed badly off-key.

Most of the rest of the programme hit a better

FESTIVAL

note. An afternoon concert by Voices for Peace, a children's choir drawn from both Catholic and Protestant communities, was full of hope, even if the choice of standards, such as *Amazing Grace* was uncharacteristic.

Elsewhere a workshop explained the differences between the musical traditions of Ulster and the Republic and both Makem and Davy Hammond, who shared the main bill, offered a more song-based style far removed from the familiar Celtic lament and jigs and reels. When Hammond sang *The Banks of the Bann*, and Makem offered *As I Walked Out*, there seemed to be a closer connection with the ballad tradition of Scottish folk music.

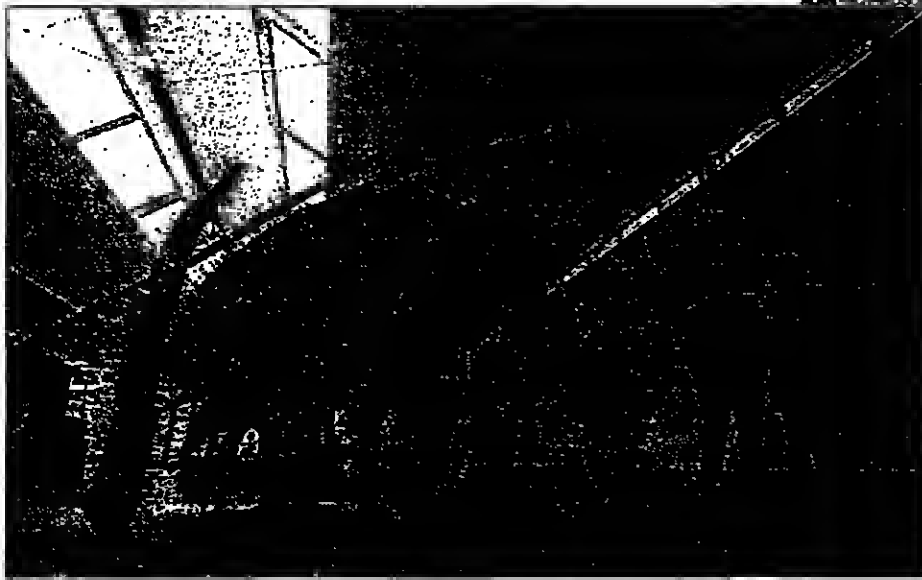
Yet the best moments came from Kentucky's Jean Ritchie, who joined them on stage. The foremost living exponent of Appalachian mountain music, her high, clear voice belied her 76 years, and her repertoire illustrated how traditional Irish song has been preserved in remote American rural communities in an almost pure form.

In her youth Ritchie learnt dozens of songs from her family of Irish-Scottish descent and first travelled to Ireland in the early 1950s to trace their origins, during which time she met the young Makem. It made for a pleasing symmetry and she seemed to represent a frail but obdurate link with a dying tradition.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

A cultural prize for Dundee

Andrew Gibbon
Williams visits
the new Dundee
Contemporary
Arts centre



Scottish success: Tony Cragg's boat becalmed in Dundee's new contemporary arts centre

Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA) is set to do for Dundee what the new Guggenheim did for Bilbao. This £9 million cultural flagship is adventurous in concept and brave in design.

The building has been designed to facilitate a unique concept. Edinburgh-based Richard Murphy Architects was faced with a potentially confusing brief: to design a building which would satisfy the demands of a tripartite client, ie, the new art-led company spearheading the development (DCA), Dundee City Council and Dundee University.

While the council desired another facility to complement the Dundee Repertory Theatre and the McManus Galleries, the university — more specifically, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design which, since 1996, has formed part of it — demanded a state-of-the-art research facility, a kind of art laboratory. DCA itself wanted a simple gallery space and accommodation for the back-up paraphernalia essential to any contemporary art venue.

A mere two years since the Scottish Arts Council National Lottery Fund voted the lion's share of the finance, some £5.4 million, Murphy has managed to satisfy each party. There is a fabulously equipped print workshop, an artist-in-residence flat and studio space, a large café area with exterior terraces, and two small-scale, luxury cinemas.

The core of Murphy's scheme is a renovated former coal warehouse which rises up behind a cliff face from re-

claimed land that forms Dundee's desolate waterfront. At the level where this reaches one of the city's principal arteries, the Nethergate, this has been extended by a new, smaller block set at an oblique angle to the old structure. At street level a severe, prow-like structure projects alongside a small piazza, the entire street frontage making a dramatic intersection between a late 18th-century Lord Provost's residence and an early 19th-century Roman Catholic cathedral.

Inside, the wit and ingenuity of the design are immediately apparent. An interior avenue, off which are located an activity area and information desks, leads directly into the vast top-lit exhibition space (something rather grander than the usual white box), while a parallel staircase descends to the restaurant, visual research centre, print workshop, cinemas, and artists' facilities.

But Murphy's most impressive achievement is the way he has fulfilled his declared intention to integrate the individual elements of his design. No one

activity is hidden from another, so that from the central thoroughfare you are aware of the galleries; from the galleries, the café area; from the café area, set at the juncture of the two blocks, almost everything. The larger cinema must be the only one in the country which allows you to see out. A shuttered window offers views across the Tay before and after every film.

What this means is that in contrast to so many comparable complexes, the creative work going on is no secret activity behind closed doors. Visitors popping in for a snack enjoy the feeling of being caught up in the artistic process, while artists and researchers should benefit from the feedback of public interest.

The inaugural exhibition, entitled *Prime*, includes virtually nothing which might be construed as dumbing down. A video of an accompanying detritus from a Joseph Beuys performance; a scattering of life-size dead crows sculpted in bronze by Kiki Smith; an enor-

mous wall-mounted, polished steel disc by Anish Kapoor, conceived as much in acoustic terms as in visual terms; and Tony Cragg's extraordinary clinker-constructed boat covered, porcupine-like, with hooks. Straight art is virtually confined to homegrown talent: Callum Innes's spare, later-day action painting.

The director, Andrew Nairne, admits to having included Warhol's screen-printed "Jackies" to cajole the public with a "name". But his personal taste makes it unlikely that popular artists are going to get much of a look-in. Next in line is the former Turner Prize candidate, Ian Davenport, whose stridently coloured, poured paint on fibre-board works form his first one-man show in a public gallery.

How far-reaching an impact this pioneering institution will have on Dundee depends on the continuing generosity of sponsors such as Atlantic Telecom, whose £100,000 supports an education programme for the next two years.

Dundee Contemporary Arts, 152 Nethergate, Dundee (01382 432290)

AROUND THE LONDON GALLERIES

SOME men have skin as supple and sensual as a woman's. The curves of their bodies seem made for the caress. And Robert Mapplethorpe understands this. His lens typically roams the contours of the corporeal landscape. But now, marking the tenth anniversary of Mapplethorpe's death, this retrospective traces the attraction to sinuous line and texture which bred the artist's homoerotic sensibilities. Although some of his later, aggressively sexual works are displayed, the earlier photographs reveal a subtler sensitivity. The curl of an orchid echoes the clean-cut curves of a vase, collages flirt with veils and layers. But the desire to outrage which made Mapplethorpe one of the touchstones of censorship was always latent. Kitch religious iconography, cold sadomasochism and flowers that unfurl like sex organs became his subjects at an early age.

Hamiltons, 13 Carlos Place, W1 (0171-499 9493), until May 1

Georg Baselitz, the painting world's equivalent of the heavy-metal thrasher, is known by many for no other reason than that he hangs his paintings upside down. "It's the best way to liberate representation from context," he explains. But in his first London show for five years he aims to touch an insouciant level of consciousness in a rather different way. There is no right way up in this series of seven paintings. Torsos are impetuously jumbled in what looks

Robert Mapplethorpe's *Untitled (Gingham)* of 1970

FOR ALL THE WORLD LIKE SOME BILLINGWAT

For all the world like some billowing daisy-printed duvet, Baselitz plays with the transparency of pattern, of a whitened surface veiling brighter layers of paint below, to shed new light on his vision of a "painting behind the canvas". Where before he tried to reach this impossible image by hacking like a wood carver through layers of paint, he now opens up the surface of his works like a window. And the carelessly sketched figures suddenly seem more like the doodles which a child might draw with a finger in the mist of a pane.

Anthony d'Offay Gallery, 24 Dering St, W1 (0171-499 4100) until April 24

Harold's *Always Saying Goodbye* is the title of Julian Schnabel's new show. What does it mean? How does it relate to the pictures? The gallery hasn't a clue. Schnabel may not have either. But perhaps this bewilderment is the best point from which to start looking at the great self-publicist's four new paintings. Oils, resin and spray paint scrawl over large, ugly-framed canvases, as though each had been applied by a different hand. Greens are applied with whipped and knotted sheets of cloth. Reds are scribbled across them like meaningless graffiti. For a moment you imagine there are muscular studies or drawings of drapery in the imprinted patterns. You search for words in the writing strokes. But inspect the canvases more closely and they dissolve into a mess. Perhaps Schnabel is naming the viewer: if I, with my personality, do it then it's art. But if you did this, it would amount to nothing more than a scrawl. If so, then these paintings untense the boundaries between the personal and impersonality.

Timothy Taylor, 1 Bruton Place, W1 (0171-409 3344) until May 1

HISTORY left Jack Yeats overshadowed by his famous poet brother. But for the Irish

he has always been an important nationalistic figure. The races, the boxing ring, dark Irish storms and tall Dublin houses are the subjects of an expressionistic painter who loved colour above anything. But this mixed and not particularly distinguished little show reveals a man who dispersed his energy into too many styles.

Theo Waddington Fine Art, 25 Cork St, W1 (0171-494 1594), until April 30

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Hitch and Others v Stone (Incorporated in Tax)

Before Mr Justice Jonathan Parker

Judgment March 18

A complex and artificial tax avoidance scheme, evidenced in a sloppily executed document by taxpayers, was held to be a sham and having no legal effect. The performance of the scheme was held to be impossible for such a conclusion to be reached.

Mr Justice Jonathan Parker so held in a reserved judgment allowing appeals brought by way of case stated by the taxpayers. Mr Henry Hitch, Mr Ian Hardy and Mrs Beatrix Hardy, from a decision in principle by the special commissioners holding that the agreements on which the scheme was based were shams.

Mr Leolin Price, QC, Miss Penelope Reed and Mr John Smart for the taxpayers and Mr Philip Vallance, QC, and Miss Karen Stern for the Crown.

MR JUSTICE JONATHAN PARKER said that the Revenue assessed the taxpayers to capital gains tax on the disposal during 1984-85 of some 463 acres of agricultural land known as Abbey Farm, Blunsdon St Andrew, Swindon, which was beneficially owned by members of the Hitch family. The taxpayers appealed the assessments relying on documents which came into existence as part of an avoidance scheme entered into by the family that was designed to convert capital sums representing the realisation of the development value of the land into income in the hands of the family, as and when received by them.

The Revenue contended that the documents were of no legal effect, its primary contention being that they were shams.

At one stage the Revenue had challenged the efficacy of the scheme on the basis of the decision of the House of Lords in *Furniss v Dawson* [1984] AC 474 but abandoned the argument shortly before the commissioners heard the case.

By agreement the commissioners had limited their decision to ruling on the Revenue's challenge to the legal effect of the documents. The commissioners found that a purported agreement dated April 16, 1984, which formed part of a tax avoidance scheme was a sham in the sense that it was "intended... to give the appearance of creating between the parties legal rights and obligations different from the actual legal rights and obligations (if any) which the parties intend to create".

per Lord Justice Diplock in *Snook v London and West Riding Investments Ltd* [1962] 2 QB 786, 802.

Following that finding, the commissioners concluded that a further purported agreement dated April 17, 1984, and two recitals to a deed dated June 22, 1984, whereby part of the farm was acquired by Crest Homes plc, were also shams.

The commissioners criticised Mr Henry Hitch and Mr Patrick Taylor, a solicitor specialising in tax avoidance, stating that their evidence was inherently unreliable and that their dealings with the Revenue had been less than straightforward.

The commissioners found that although the evidence was largely circumstantial they were driven to the conclusion that the taxpayers did not intend by virtue of the 1984 agreement to grant a 999-year lease of the farm to a small Singapore company.

Having correctly directed themselves on the question of sham, per Lord Justice Diplock in *Snook*, it was impossible to regard the 1984 agreement as a sham. Where parties had entered into an agreement to effect a particular disposition, and that disposition was subsequently effected, there was no scope for an argument that the parties did not intend the agreement to have its expressed effect.

In a case involving a complex and artificial tax avoidance scheme, where the scheme documentation was sloppily executed, where the evidence of the taxpayer and of his legal adviser, the devisor of the scheme, was found to be unreliable, and where their dealings with the Revenue had been less than straightforward, there had to be a strong temptation for any tribunal to throw up its hands and cry "sham".

But in the instant case, and so long as the *Snook* definition remained that temptation had to be resisted. Having examined the facts found and with every respect for the experienced special commissioners who heard the case, the only reasonable conclusion was inconsistent with their decision.

Any challenge to the fiscal efficacy of the scheme had to be based on *Furniss v Dawson*. No such challenge had been mounted by the Revenue and no view would be expressed as to whether it had been if it would have succeeded.

Solicitors: Gregory, Rowcliffe & Milners for Mr T. P. D. Taylor, Douglas, Isle of Man; Solicitor of Inland Revenue.

whether it was performed at all. If and to the extent it was performed, it was difficult to maintain that it was a sham; the more so in circumstances where performance of it led to real as opposed to sham consequences affecting third parties.

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Chorion plc and Others v Lane

Before Mr Justice Laddie

Judgment February 24

It was wrong for essentially the same issues to be run in two separate tribunals. Where there was a significant overlap between an application to an employment tribunal and an action in the High Court, with common issues permeating each dispute and an effective agreed timetable, it was appropriate to stay the former.

Mr Justice Laddie so held in the Chancery Division, an interlocutory application by the plaintiffs, Chorion plc, Chorion (IP) Ltd, Enid Blyton Ltd, Agatha Christie Ltd, Robert Bly (1929) Ltd and Rights Ltd, in ordering David Charles William Lane either to apply for a stay of his complaint of unfair dismissal in his employment tribunal case No 6004195/98, or to consent to an application for such a stay by the plaintiffs.

Mr Ian Gearing, QC and Miss Juliet May for the plaintiffs; Mr Michael Collins, QC and Mr Martin Griffiths for Mr Lane.

MR JUSTICE LADDIE said that the plaintiffs were a group concerned, inter alia, with the exploitation of intellectual property rights.

Mr Lane had become managing director of the third plaintiff in February 1993, and in July 1997 an executive director of the first and managing director of each of the other plaintiffs.

On September 29, 1998, he had handed in a letter, the effect of which was in dispute, the plaintiffs contended that it resigned all six of his directorships, and he that it only resigned his directorship of the first plaintiff. Next day he had returned to his office in the plaintiffs' premises and cleared out his effects.

On December 11 his solicitors wrote a letter before action to the plaintiffs, accompanied by an originating application to the employment tribunal setting out his grounds for asserting unfair dismissal.

On February 15 the plaintiffs served their own statement of claim against Mr Lane alleging wrongful acts committed by him both while still a senior executive of the plaintiffs and subsequently. On three matters, there seemed no dispute:

1. It was proper that Mr Lane's claim for unfair dismissal be heard as soon as possible;

2. Issues of breach of fiduciary duty and of confidence raised serious issues of impropriety; and

3. Allegations of unfair dismissal

also carried a stigma, although maybe a lesser one.

His Lordship had considerable sympathy for Mr Lane's view that the timetable proposed by the plaintiffs for the tribunal hearing was too tight for him adequately to defend himself; speedy litigation was likely to be cheaper than slow, but there came a point when speed could give rise to injustice.

His Lordship would order the plaintiffs' amended statement of claim to be served by March, adopt Mr Collins' timetable as the fastest that could be imposed while doing justice to Mr Lane, and order an expedited trial in the High Court to come on not before July 1, with an estimated duration of five days.

That left only one issue: should the court make an order effectively forcing Mr Lane to hold back on his application to the employment tribunal?

His Lordship would proceed on the basis that, as at present formulated, the same questions of breach of fiduciary duty and of confidence would form part, but not the whole, of the matters to be determined in the tribunal and would form a major part of the High Court action.

The courts had always set their face against avoidable duplication of proceedings: in *Cahm v Ward* and *Goldstone Ltd* [1979] ICR 574, 586 Mr Justice Bristow, delivering the decision of the Employment Appeal Tribunal in relation to a similar common question which formed part of the investigation both by the High Court and by the industrial tribunal had said: "We think it clearly right in the interests of justice that the High Court proceedings should be heard first."

Mr Collins urged that here an application to stay being on foot before the tribunal, his Lordship should not take that decision away from the tribunal; also, that in the case of an unfair dismissal there was a fundamental objective that the employee's claim should be determined as soon as possible.

However, his Lordship had come to the conclusion that it would be wrong for essentially the same serious issues to be run in two separate tribunals and that it was appropriate to make an order that Mr Lane should apply for a stay, or consent to the plaintiffs' application for a stay, of his complaint of unfair dismissal, currently listed to take place on April 26, pending final determination of the High Court action, and, in the meantime, be restrained from proceeding before the tribunal.

Solicitors: Norton Rose, Simmons & Simmons.

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Duty to make full and accurate disclosure

Bird v Hadkinson

Before Mr Justice Neuberger

Judgment March 4

A disclosure order contained in an injunction carried with it an obligation to do more than simply tell the truth. Accordingly, a respondent who gave a truthful but inaccurate answer, without taking reasonable steps to investigate the truth, was in contempt of court.

Mr Justice Neuberger so held in the Chancery Division when ordering that the respondent, Bernadette Hadkinson, pay 85 per cent of the costs on an indemnity basis of abandoned committal proceedings brought by Colin Graham Bird, the trustee in bankruptcy of Colin Graham Hadkinson, the respondent's husband.

Mr Andrew Lenon for Mr Bird; Mr David Marks for Mrs Hadkinson.

MR JUSTICE NEUBERGER said that on February 27, 1998 a bankruptcy order was made against Mr Hadkinson. According to his own sworn statement of affairs, his total indebtedness was approximately £17.1 million; of that, only about £800 had been received by the trustee in bankruptcy.

Mr Justice Eady had granted

the principal creditor an asset-freezing Mareva injunction restraining Mr Hadkinson from dealing with or disposing of his assets. Some two weeks after the Mareva was granted and served, he transferred approximately £4.25 million from his bank account in Jersey to his wife, who deposited the money into an account in Switzerland.

On December 2, 1998, Mr Justice Bence granted a Mareva injunction against Mrs Hadkinson. Paragraph 2 of the order required her to provide certain information within 24 hours of service and serve a confirmatory affidavit within seven days.

On December 5, 1998 she swore an affidavit which purported to provide the information required by paragraph 2 of the order. She said that she did not know what had happened to the funds transferred to her account but that to the best of her knowledge they were still in her account.

The applicant's solicitors considered that the answers were wholly adequate and that Mrs Hadkinson had failed to take all steps which she ought reasonably to have taken to obtain and provide the necessary information required by the order. Accordingly, the applicant instigated committal proceedings against her.

On February 9, 1998, she provided a fuller affidavit and in those circumstances the applicant decided not to proceed with the motion to commit but contended that she should have her costs on an indemnity basis.

His Lordship said that the case raised a question of principle: where an order such as the familiar disclosure order in a Mareva injunction required the respondent to do something, was it enough that they give an honest answer or did they have to do more than merely provide an answer to satisfy the terms of the injunction?

In his Lordship's judgment the order carried with it an obligation to do more than merely tell the truth. If the respondent gave a truthful but inaccurate answer, without taking reasonable steps to investigate the truth or otherwise of the answer, then that was contempt.

In the instant case, Mrs Hadkinson had not given an accurate answer to the questions in the order and acted in an unreasonably dilatory manner.

Second, his Lordship said that he had to consider the mental element required for contempt on which there was conflict between the Court of Appeal in *Intelli v Squarfit* and *Others* [1993] QB

83 and the House of Lords in *Director General of Fair Trading v Pioneer Concrete (UK) and Another* [1995] 1 AC 450.

In *Intelli* Lord Justice Farquharson said (at p 90) that it was inappropriate to find contempt unless "the evidence establishes beyond reasonable doubt that [the respondent] did intend to act in contempt of the court's authority".

The decision in *Intelli* was a decision of a strong Court of Appeal and would ordinarily be binding, however, his Lordship was satisfied that he should not follow it.

The House of Lords decision in *Pioneer* was more consistent with the previous line of authority. Moreover, *Intelli* suffered from two problems.

First, the previous line of authority was not clear and second, the decision of the Court of Appeal in *Pioneer*, which was subsequently reversed by the House of Lords, appeared to have been cited in skeleton arguments, which might explain the observations of Lord Justice Farquharson.

Accordingly, his Lordship said that he was not only free, but should, follow the approach of the House of Lords in *Pioneer*.

Solicitors: Stephenson Harwood; Wragge & Co, Birmingham.

Whether driver was an employee

Express and Echo Publications Ltd v Tanton

Before Lord Justice Hirst, Lord Justice Peter Gibson and Lord Justice Auld

Judgment March 11

It was necessary for a contract of employment to contain an obligation on the part of the employee to provide services personally. A contract which allowed services to be carried out by a person other than the contractor was a contract for services and not a contract of service.

The Court of Appeal so held allowing an appeal by Express and Echo Publications Ltd from the dismissal by the Employment Appeal Tribunal (Judge Peter Clark, Mr P. R. A. Jacques and Miss S. M. Wilson) (unreported, January 31, 1998) of their appeal against a decision of

an industrial tribunal sitting at Exeter on September 16, 1997 on the preliminary issue whether the applicant, Ernest Tanton, was an employee within the meaning of section 230 of the Employment Rights Act 1996.

Mr Jonathan Swift for the employer, Mr Tanton in person.

LORD JUSTICE PETER GIBSON said Mr Tanton had been an employee of the company but had been made redundant in 1995 and had subsequently been taken on as a driver under an "agreement for services", clause 3.3 of which provided:

"To the extent that the contractor is unable or unwilling to perform the services personally he shall arrange at his own expense entirely for another suitable person to perform the services."

His Lordship referred to Clark v

Oxfordshire Health Authority [1998] IRLR 123 where it was held that "irreducible minimum of obligation was necessary to create a contract of employment. Without such an obligation it could not be said that the contract was one of service."

The law now recognised unambiguously that a contract of employment involved mutual trust and confidence. *Malik v Bank of Credit & Commerce International SA* (The Times June 13, 1997; [1997] ICR 606).

It was established that where a person who worked for another was not required to provide those services personally it could not be right as a matter of law that the relationship between the worker and the person for whom he worked was that of employer and employee.

It was the common intention of the parties that Mr Tanton should be a self-employed contractor.

Matters such as the absence of holiday and sickness pay which the industrial tribunal chairman had found to be pointers to a contract of service were in no way inconsistent with a contract for services.

Both the tribunal chairman and the appeal tribunal had erred in law. The only conclusion which could properly be reached was that the contract was one for services.

Lord Justice Hirst and Lord Justice Auld agreed.

Solicitors: Foot & Bowden, Plymouth.

whether it was performed at all. If and to the extent it was performed, it was difficult to maintain that it was a sham; the more so in circumstances where performance of it led to real as opposed to sham consequences affecting third parties.

It was impossible to regard the 1984 agreement as a sham. Where parties had entered into an agreement to effect a particular disposition, and that disposition was subsequently effected, there was no scope for an argument that the parties did not intend the agreement to have its expressed effect.

In a case involving a complex and artificial tax avoidance scheme, where the scheme documentation was sloppily executed, where the evidence of the taxpayer and of his legal adviser, the devisor of the scheme, was found to be unreliable, and where their dealings with the Revenue had been less than straightforward, there had to be a strong temptation for any tribunal to throw up its hands and cry "sham".

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FOOTBALL

Offending players face stiffer penalties

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

PLAYERS could be fined heavily for disciplinary offences next season under a new scheme proposed by the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA). If the system is given the go-ahead during the summer, persistent offenders might lose a week's wages should they fail to improve their behaviour.

The move follows a meeting of professional football's Negotiation and Consultative Committee, which is made up of representatives from the PFA, the Football League, the Football Association and the FA Premier League. It has been concerned by the mounting lack of discipline throughout the divisions and the need to hit players where it hurts — in their pay packets.

Under the new rules, a proportion of their wages will be docked after they have collected eight bookings. More serious penalties could be imposed for those who are sent off, with fines of 50 per cent of their weekly wages for a first red card, possibly rising to 75 per cent and 100 per cent for subsequent dismissals.

Players sent off for violent conduct and similar offences that warrant a three-match suspension would lose a week's wages. The maximum penalty would be two weeks' wages — the same level at which players can be punished at the moment.

Gordon Taylor, the PFA chief executive, said yesterday: "We have a responsibility to clean up the game. Players are reluctant to be fined, particularly when they are only doing their job, and my concern is for offences that are not intended fouls at all but simply misjudgment of tackles."

Players know that suspension is part and parcel of the job and we sympathise with defenders. For them to go through a season without a

caution is practically impossible."

Dennis Wise, the Chelsea captain, would not have fared well had the new system been in operation this season. He has been sent off four times and missed 14 matches because of suspension. The bank balance of Mark Hughes, the Wales and Southampton midfielder, would also have suffered. He has received 15 cautions and twice been fined £2,000, for reaching 11 and 14 bookings.

The FA Premier League and Football League have used different disciplinary measures in recent seasons. Two years ago, it was the traditional totting-up procedure, whereby players received one to four points per caution and were punished when they reached totals of 21, 33 and 45.

Last year, players were penalised when they had picked up five, eight and 11 bookings. If they managed to play five full matches without being cautioned, their last yellow card would be expunged. However, this was discarded last summer. This season, players face suspension when they reach five and eight cautions. Should they get to 11 and 14, they have to appear before an FA commission and can be suspended and/or fined.

"We have an agreement in principle, but no percentages have been agreed on," Chris Hull, a Football League spokesman, said yesterday. "The minutiae needs to be ratified at another meeting in the next three months."

Taylor's main concern is making the fines fair for players in the FA Cup Premier League and those in the lower divisions, whose earnings differ vastly. "We are trying to be even-handed," he said. "Some club chairmen want to pay players nothing when they are suspended, but that is wrong."



High flyer: Fabio Bilica, of Brazil, blocks a shot during the Fifa Youth World Cup match against Spain in Calabar, Nigeria. Spain won 2-0

Venglos decides to remain at Celtic

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

JOZEF VENGLOS yesterday ended speculation about his future at Celtic by saying that he planned to stay on as coach of the Scottish champions next season.

However, Venglos, who coached Czechoslovakia to the quarter-finals of the 1990 World Cup in Italy, is expected to take on a role as a technical advisor in the long term, once a successor has been found.

"Celtic has every confidence in Jozef Venglos and greatly appreciates his valuable contribution to the club," Allan MacDonald, the acting Celtic chief executive, said in a statement.

"This is reflected in his decision to remain as head coach for next season and to build upon his good efforts to date. He has also pledged himself to work with the new management team to help identify and transfer responsibilities to his successor as seamlessly as possible."

"In the longer term the club envisages Jozef playing a con-

tinuing role for the club as a European technical advisor."

There had been speculation in the media that the Slovak trainer would leave at the end of the season, but Venglos said in the statement: "I am pleased to clarify my position. Our plans for next season are already moving forward."

Uefa responds to protests

THE controversial system of awarding European places to teams that do better in the FA Cup than in the league may soon be a thing of the past. Clubs in the FA Cup Premier League have greeted the new system with dismay and Uefa, European football's governing body, said yesterday that it will discuss the issue at its executive committee meeting in Israel later this month.

"The Premier League asked us if we could change the rules and while we understand their

concern, we can't do it for this season," a Uefa spokesman said. "Next season, however, it may well be that only the winner of the FA Cup can have a European place."

Whether they win or lose against Tottenham Hotspur in the FA Cup semi-final on Sunday, Newcastle United will gain automatic entry into the expanded Uefa Cup next season. With Arsenal and Manchester United all but assured of places in the European Cup Champions' League and Tot-

tenham having already earned a Uefa Cup place by winning the Worthington Cup, Newcastle are the only team left to profit from the European place linked to success in the FA Cup.

Because of the overhaul of European club football next season, with the Cup Winners' Cup being absorbed into the Uefa Cup, this means that only four places in the Premiership guarantee a team finishing outside the top three a place in Europe.

power. Castellini, a stand-in coach for the last two months of the season, said: "Ronaldinho was absolutely delighted to accept the captaincy and that shows how attached he is to Inter, to the team shirt he wears and to the values it represents."

"We have now agreed with the rest of the team that he will be captain for the matches ahead, even if Bergomi and Pagliuca are playing."

The victory on Saturday night was Castellini's first match in charge since replacing Mircea Lucescu last month. "I'm very pleased with how it went, but the merit isn't mine," he said.

"I can't have changed things in such a short period of time. It was the players, who realised they were in a tough situation."

Inter's return to winning ways coincided with Ronaldinho's recovery after months of injury problems and Castellini is counting on the Brazilian for the last seven games of the season.

Gullit puts Ferguson to the test before semi-final

BY GEORGE CAULKIN

AFTER more than three months of claim, counter-claim, innuendo and rumour, Duncan Ferguson will make his comeback for Newcastle United tonight as Raul Gullit contemplates one of the biggest gambles of his managerial career.

Whitley Bay, of the Unibond League, will provide the opposition at the Newcastle training ground for a closed-door match that should determine the Scottish striker's level of involvement in the FA Cup semi-final against Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday. Steve Howey, another recent absentee, will also take part.

Ferguson's inclusion is the more startling, however, given that Gullit's £8 million signing has played no competitive football since being substituted in Newcastle's 4-2 defeat at Liverpool last December. A groin injury has restricted Ferguson to just five first-team starts after his surprise transfer from Everton the previous month.

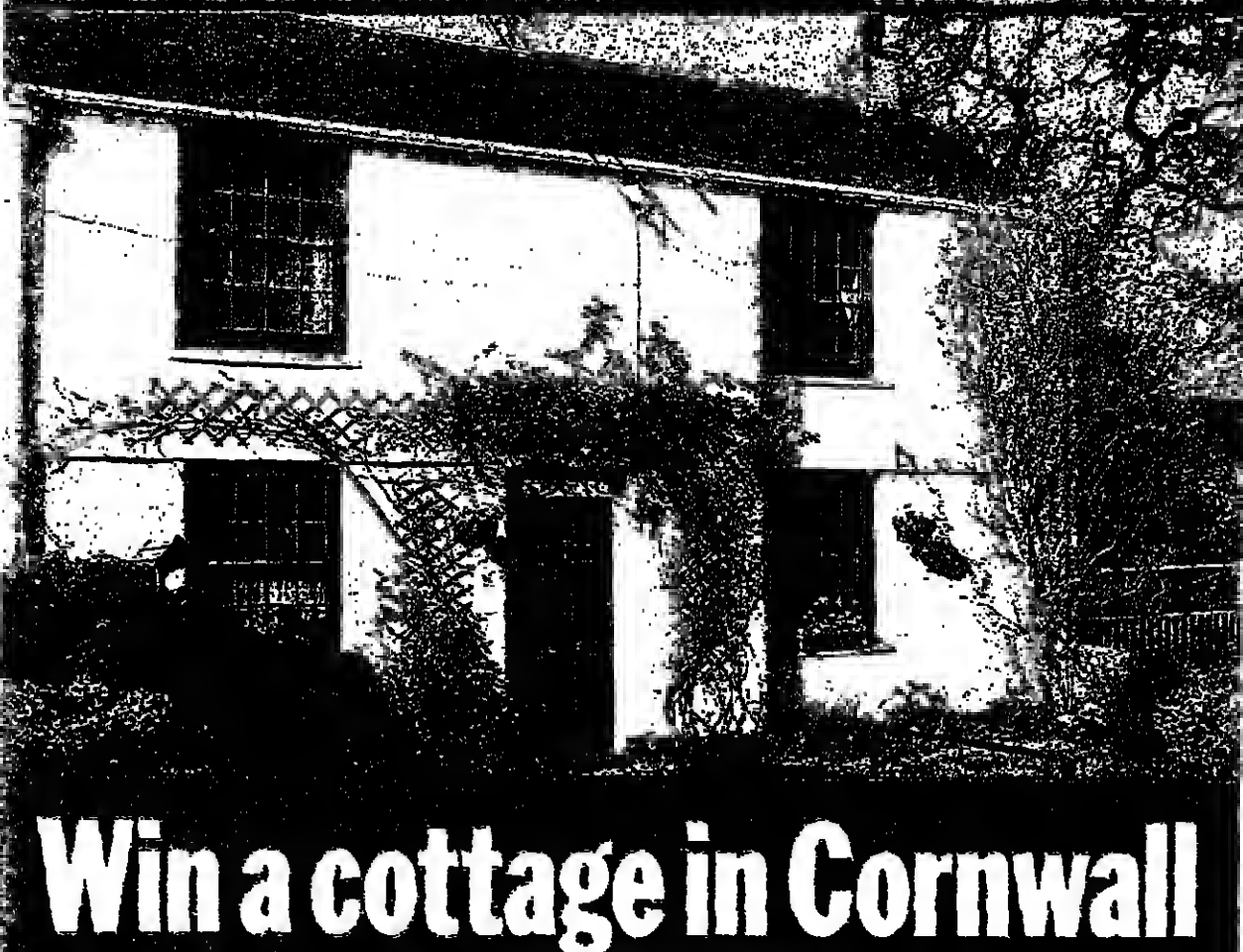
His recuperation has not been helped by a series of niggling, though unrelated, setbacks. Due to play in a reserve game against York City last week, he broke down in training, raising the suggestion that his season could be over. Gullit has now to decide whether the aerial prowess that Ferguson can offer is worth the obvious risk, posed by his suspect fitness. A place on the bench at Old Trafford is the likely outcome.

The prospect of Gullit fielding neither of his favoured forwards — as he was forced to do for the 1-1 draw with Tottenham at St James' Park on Monday — has receded. Alan Shearer, the Newcastle and England captain, has recovered from an ankle injury, saying last night: "I'll be OK for Sunday."

Dietmar Hamann, the German midfielder, is also nearing full fitness, while Howey, the defensive linchpin of his side, trained with his team-mates yesterday for the first time since damaging his calf against Nottingham Forest last month. Only Stephen Glass is definitely unavailable for selection; he will undergo a knee operation tomorrow.

AN EXCLUSIVE PRIZE DRAW

THE TIMES



Win a cottage in Cornwall

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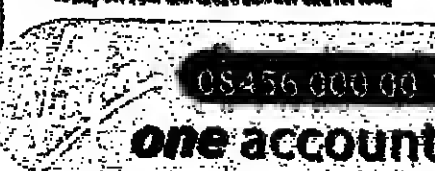
Today *The Times*, in association with the Virgin One account, offers readers the chance to win a lovely cottage in the typical Cornish village of Perranwell Station. Smyth Cottage, with its two bedrooms and pretty garden, is the ideal holiday home. Close to Turo and an 18-hole golf course, our prize cottage will provide the lucky winner with the perfect place from which to watch the eclipse of the sun on August 11.

HOW TO ENTER Collect 12 *Times* tokens and two tokens from *The Sunday Times* and attach them to an entry form which will appear again next Tuesday. Tokens will appear up to April 18 and a bonus token will be published on Friday. The winner will be chosen at random from all entries received by Friday, April 30, 1999. Normal *Times* Newspapers prize draw rules apply. The terms and conditions will appear again on Saturday.



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CHANGING TIMES

FOOTBALL IN BRIEF

■ FOUR FA Cup Premier League clubs could be forced to release their Norway international players later this month. Norway have a European championship qualifying match against Georgia on April 28. Nils Johan Semb, the manager, said yesterday that he will invoke a ruling by Uefa, the European governing body, which states that players cannot be included in club matches in a five-day period leading up to international. Manchester United, Chelsea, Leeds United and Sheffield Wednesday are all affected as they have fixtures scheduled for Sunday, April 25.

■ Sepp Blatter, the president of Fifa, the world governing body, yesterday ordered referees at the world youth championship in Nigeria to take action to stop players who feign injury. Blatter made his comments at a press conference in Lagos after being asked what he thought of the behaviour of the Brazil players during their 2-0 group E defeat against Spain in Calabar.

"Players should know that they play on grass and not on water," Blatter said. "Referees must give a yellow card for each incident of feigning injury, but at the moment they are not doing this. When players are taken off on a stretcher they appear to be dying, but when their feet touch African soil they suddenly become fit again," he added. Five people were detained in Nigeria yesterday on suspicion of interfering with a stadium generator on Sunday, causing a blackout in the second half of the match between Mexico and Ireland. The suspects were seen near the generator that failed, causing the floodlights to go out early in the second half of the match.

■ Mircea Lucescu, the Romanian who resigned as coach of Internazionale a little more than two weeks ago, has returned for a further spell as coach of Rapid Bucharest, the club announced yesterday. Lucescu, who left Inter immediately after the 4-0 defeat by Sampdoria on

March 21, takes over from Dumitru Dumitriu, who recently resigned from Rapid, in second place in the Romanian first division.

■ Nine countries have expressed an interest in staging the first club world championship, Fifa announced yesterday.

Mexico, Turkey, Paraguay, Uruguay, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Tahiti, China and the United States have all indicated a desire to stage the new competition, scheduled to take place from January 5 to 14 next year. The host country is expected to be selected before the end of May.

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8/11 MAN. UTD.	10/3 JUVENTUS	11/5 DRAW		
First player to score	Man. Utd. to win by	Juventus to win by		
1-0	2-0	2-1	3-0	3-1
Cole	20/1	22/1	25/1	35/1
Yorke	20/1	22/1	25/1	35/1
Beckham	50/1	60/1	66/1	100/1
Giggs	60/1	66/1	75/1	100/1
Keane	75/1	80/1	100/1	125/1
First player to score	Juventus to win by	Draw		
1-0	2-0	2-1	3-0	3-1
Inzaghi	35/1	80/1	66/1	250/1
Esmaider	50/1	125/1	100/1	325/1
Zidane	50/1	125/1	100/1	325/1
Davidovics	100/1	250/1	200/1	550/1
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CRICKET

Langer's century puts pressure on West Indies

FROM PAT GIBSON IN ANTIGUA

VIV RICHARDS—or Sir Vivian, as we must call him these days—has agreed to bring his considerable presence to bear on West Indies in the forthcoming seven one-day international matches against Australia and the World Cup in England in May and June.

His involvement, by the invitation of Pat Patterson, the president of the West Indies Cricket Board, reflects the continuing concern about their batting, which could not be having a more severe examination yesterday as Australia pushed for the victory in the final Test that would level the series and retain their hold on the Frank Worrell Trophy.

It follows Richards' contribution to West Indies' famous victory in Barbados, when Brian Lara revealed that his frequent visits to the dressing-room had helped to motivate him and his team. They reached a victory target of 308 with one wicket to spare.

There have been times in this series when Ambrose has appeared to be coming to the end of the road after more than a decade as West Indies' attacking spearhead, but, after

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA: First innings 303 (S R Waugh 72 not out, J Langer 51, G E Ambrose 54)

Second innings
G S Blewett to Ambrose 7
M J Slater to Waugh 44
J L Langer to Ambrose 127
M E Waugh to Ambrose 135
S R Waugh to Ambrose 144
R T Ponting not out 21
I A Healy to Ambrose 18
C R Miller to Langer 1
A C Dale to Hooper 0
S C McGrath to Hooper 2
G McGrath to Waugh 17
Extras (b 2, lb 1, w 3, nb 11) 17
Total 306

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-15, 2-76, 3-223, 4-241, 5-268, 6-287, 7-288, 8-288, 9-288
J L Langer 51, S R Waugh 72, M J Slater 44, G E Ambrose 54, C R Miller 1, A C Dale 0, S C McGrath 2, G McGrath 17, Extras 17

WEST INDIES: First innings 222 (B C Lara 100, D L Orchard (South Africa) and S A Bucknor)

taking only 11 wickets in the first three Tests, he has come back into his own on his home ground. He took five for 94 in Australia's first innings and yesterday claimed the important wickets of the Waugh twins in an exemplary spell of two wickets for nine runs in ten overs, six of them maidens.

Ambrose, 35, has been written off before, but he has always insisted that only he will know when to quit and he looked as though he could go on for some time yet as he confounded Mark Waugh, who had scored 65 in a third-wicket partnership of 147 with Langer, and then Steve in successive overs.

Not even Ambrose could deny Langer his century, however. He shrugged off the embarrassment of being comprehensively beaten twice by

Ambrose when he was in the 90s to complete his third Test century in exactly 5½ hours, off 252 balls. He hit a six and seven fours.

Langer is yet another of those overseas players who readily admit that they have benefited from playing county cricket. Indeed, the 1,448 runs that he scored for Middlesex last season, at an average of 62.05, had much to do with his recall to the Australia team for the tour of Pakistan last year.

He scored his first Test hundred in Peshawar, when Mark Taylor was making his monumental 334 not out, went on to make an unbeaten 179 against England in Adelaide and now produced his best innings of the series when his captain needed it most.

Steve Waugh was still haunted by what happened in Barbados and Australia's progress was painfully slow, particularly after Hooper had pitched one of his off breaks outside Langer's leg stump and turned it so much that it hit the off.

That was an encouraging sign for Australia, but still they fretted over whether they had enough, scoring only 65 runs in 33 overs before lunch and then losing their last five wickets for 32. Three of them fell to Courtney Walsh, giving him 26 in the series and taking him to within 11 wickets of Kapil Dev's Test record of 434.

LINKS

WEBSITE: www.cricknet.org

TELEVISION: Live on Sky Sports 2, from 12pm.



Langer acknowledges the applause of the Antigua crowd after reaching his century yesterday

Stewart seeks end to England losing sequence

FROM RICHARD HOBSON IN SHARJAH

EVEN with a new electronic scoreboard and an elegantly-shaped roof capping one of the stands, it requires a vivid imagination to mistake the CBE Stadium in Sharjah for Lord's. Yet it is here, in temperatures approaching 37C and on pitches without a tinge of green, that the countdown to the World Cup begins for England today.

Alec Stewart, the captain, was merely being honest when he said there was little that the selectors can learn from the Coca-Cola Cup over the next fortnight that might alter the thinking for the tournament proper, which begins against Sri Lanka in London NW8 on May 14.

After losing six of the past seven one-day internationals at the end of the Australia tour, however, the importance of linking a few victories together should not be underestimated. If they can repeat the performance of 17 months ago, when a different England side led by Adam Hogg, beat India, Pakistan and West Indies, then the World Cup can be undertaken with more optimism.

New cameras brings World Cup into line

AN INNOVATIVE £500,000 camera system, designed to assist the third umpire, is to be used at the World Cup, which starts next month.

The England and Wales Cricket Board hopes that the International Cricket Council will donate about £200,000 for the Panasonic Pan-e system, with the electronics company contributing the rest of the money.

The system has been used in South Africa and involves the

placing of four fixed cameras level with the stumps at either end of the wicket, making line decisions easier to assess.

Salim Malik, the former captain involved in allegations of match-fixing, was yesterday named in Pakistan's 15-man squad for the World Cup. Salim was not included in the provisional squad, but after a dismal performance by the middle-order batsmen during the tri-nation series in India, he was recalled by the selectors.

With that in mind it must be assumed that the XI chosen to face Pakistan over 50 overs under lights today is the side that is thought most likely to beat Sri Lanka next month. The only complication is a slight back injury to Fraser, although considering the flight from the training camp in Lahore was delayed by 12 hours, including a two-hour wait on the

runway, it is fortunate that no more of the 15-man squad have ailments.

Eight of the team appears to be fixed: Knight and Stewart to open followed by Hick, Thorpe, whose recovery from a back problem is crucial, and Fairbrother. Gough and Mullenally will take the new ball and Croft is the only specialist spin bowler. Given that Austin or Fraser will be the third seamer, and that Falham is the most likely No.7, it leaves the pivotal position at six to be filled. While Hogg's star has fallen over the winter, Andrew Flintoff has responded emphatically to the challenge.

Pakistan provide stiff opposition, having completed a sequence of victories against India over the winter by winning the Pepsi Cup in Bangalore three days ago. A large expatriate community will occupy most of the 12,000 capacity and the absence of Waqar Younis and Mushtaq Ahmed, rested ahead of the World Cup, is unlikely to diminish their prospects.

FIXTURES: April 7: England v Pakistan; April 8: England v Pakistan; April 9: England v Pakistan; April 10: England v Pakistan; April 11: England v Pakistan; April 12: England v Pakistan; April 13: England v Pakistan; April 14: England v Pakistan; April 15: England v Pakistan; April 16: England v Pakistan; April 17: England v Pakistan; April 18: England v Pakistan; April 19: England v Pakistan; April 20: England v Pakistan; April 21: England v Pakistan; April 22: England v Pakistan; April 23: England v Pakistan; April 24: England v Pakistan; April 25: England v Pakistan; April 26: England v Pakistan; April 27: England v Pakistan; April 28: England v Pakistan; April 29: England v Pakistan; April 30: England v Pakistan; May 1: England v Pakistan; May 2: England v Pakistan; May 3: England v Pakistan; May 4: England v Pakistan; May 5: England v Pakistan; May 6: England v Pakistan; May 7: England v Pakistan; May 8: England v Pakistan; May 9: England v Pakistan; May 10: England v Pakistan; May 11: England v Pakistan; 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Apocalypse soon

1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem or issue that needs to be addressed. This involves gathering information and understanding the context of the problem.

Four legs good, two legs also pretty good

Most wildlife conservationists now seem to subscribe to the Orwellian dictum, "Four legs good, two legs bad"—and that curse goes for Peter Stringfellow, too, even though his hairstyle indicates that he is trying desperately to metamorphose into an Afghan hound. Millions of pounds are raised every year to safeguard endangered species and pillaged rainforests. But we have become so attuned to the idea that nature conservation is about saving forests and jungles and animals from man's predatory behaviour that it comes as a jolt when someone like Charles Lane comes along to shake some sense into us—not by preaching "Four legs good, two legs bad," but just by reminding us that for nature conservation to have any hope of working we would do well to appreciate that, actually, "Four legs good, two legs also pretty good."

Counterblast: The Price of Conservation (BBC2) is a chilling story, unhappily told. Lane, who has worked in Tanzania for more than ten years as an agriculturalist and social scientist, understands why people want to protect endangered wildlife: he understands because he wants to protect it, too. But Lane thinks that many of us who feel good because we have contributed to, say, saving the rhino, might not feel quite so good if we knew that many conservation programmes are executed at the expense of those indigenous people who once lived on the land now being fenced off as wildlife preserves. These are local residents who have lived alongside these elephants and rhinos for centuries and who are often those responsible for preserving the African landscape in a state fit for safari tourists. Lane led us to the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania's

most visited tourist destination. It is full of wildlife. It is also home to 50,000 indigenous, mostly Masai, residents. But "today," said Lane, "the Masai are told to leave lands as they regard as their own. They signed an agreement with the British colonial Governor in 1958 to vacate what is now the nearby Serengeti National Park for rights of habitation in perpetuity in what is now called Ngorongoro Conservation Area. However this promise has been broken."

Naitore Monjor, an elderly Masai, can recall the day, 25 years ago, when his village was evicted from the vast former crater floor in Ngorongoro where they reared cattle and grew crops. "The army arrived in the morning with torches and woke everybody up. They beat the children and forced everybody out of their homes and drove them up the crater wall. Any man that resisted

was put in jail. Some cattle got lost and went back, and they were eaten by lions, hyenas, etc. Some of the women who were near term aborted. The people were just shoved up here and left with no shelter, no protection or anything from the elements." Doesn't sound all that dissimilar to what Milosevic gets up to, does it? Lane believes that population pressures and poverty will eventu-

ally overthrow this approach to conservation: "We have to look at something more just, much more complex to ensure that Nature's bounty here is preserved for posterity and local people have a future." Similar suffering is being inflicted on dispossessed indigenous peoples in other countries and on other continents. Passionate but not pushy, Lane would make a good presenter for a series investigating similar tensions elsewhere—not instead of David Attenborough's wonderful wildlife films, but alongside them.

In *Chasing The Tiger* (BBC1), Julian Pettifer also showed that if tigers are now threatened with extinction, it is not because of the indigenous people who have shared the tiger's habitat for centuries. Blame, instead, the poachers and traders servicing the Chinese medicine market for tiger products, which supposedly make you strong and brave.

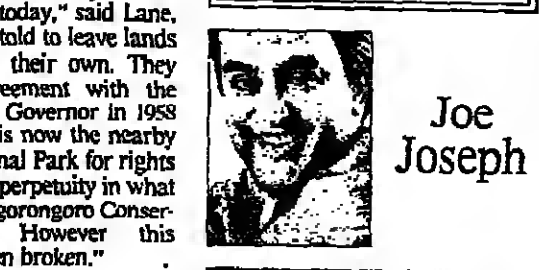
For a rich country, Japan shows a particularly disheartening contempt for environmental legislation. In one Tokyo shop, our man with a hidden camera is offered more than just tiger bones: "This is tiger's penis. It's a bit off-colour, though," which was forgivable under the circumstances—the circumstances being that it had been detached from its owner and placed in a cellophane bag. "You steep it in white liquor for about three to six months and then you drink the liquid." If you're willing to drink that, then frankly you're probably as brave as you'll ever need to be on this earth.

Typical of Japan's pitiful unconcern for wildlife was a scene from a Japanese TV game show in which three Japanese celebrities were taken to a Shanghai restaurant and asked to identify exotic dishes. Could this one be turtle? Or badger? No, it's

tiger, actually. A Bengal tiger was then led into the restaurant. Instead of throwing up in disgust, the three female celebrities faked panic in a cutesy, girly, game-show way. The only thing in this scene which looked the least bit dignified was the tiger.

When Stephen Tompkinson reached Bangkok in *Great Railway Journeys* (BBC2), he made a traditional gesture at a market stall of paying to release a caged bird—a popular Zen form of earning celestial credits. "It's a nice idea," said Tompkinson, who makes a jolly travelling companion providing you can stop him breaking into song, "even if the birds are caught and caged specially to be sold to the likes of me." This is a neat form of recycling, but I'm not sure it's quite what Charles Lane had in mind when he advocated getting the local people personally and financially involved in caring for wildlife.

REVIEW



Joe Joseph

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As HTV West except:
12.20-12.30pm Central News; Weather (943020)
12.55 Lie Detector (2828736)
1.25 The Jerry Springer Show (4092552)
2.10-2.40 Echo Point (8905822)
3.15-3.30 Central News; Weather (5048129)
5.30 Shortland Street (485)
6.00-6.30 Central News at Six; Weather (378)
11.20-11.30 Central News; Weather (804397)
4.05am Central Nightfinder '99 (8524750)
5.20-5.30 Asian Eye (9767934)

As HTV West except:
12.15pm Westcountry News (7212991)
12.27-12.30 Illuminations (9455939)
12.55-1.25 Westcountry Lunchtime Live; Weather (2828736)
1.25 The Jerry Springer Show (4092552)
2.10-2.40 Lie Detector (8905822)
3.15-3.30 Westcountry News; Weather (5048129)
4.59-5.00 Birthday People (8043264)
5.30 Peter Gorton for Starters (465)
6.00-6.30 Westcountry Live; Weather (378)
11.20-11.30 Westcountry News; Weather (804397)

As HTV West except: 12.15pm-12.30pm Meridian News; Weather (7212991) 5.30 Big Day Out (25) (485) 6.00-6.30 Meridian Tonight (378) 7.29-7.30 Meridian Weather (942194) 11.20-11.30 Meridian News; Weather (804397) 5.00am-5.30p Freescreen (7) (91514)

As HTV West except: 12.15pm Anglia Air Watch (9450755) 12.20-12.30 Anglia News and Weather (943020) 5.29 Anglia Air Watch (8375084) 6.00-6.30 Anglia News (1113) (485) 6.00-6.30 Anglia News (378) 11.19 Anglia Air Watch (428026) 11.20-11.30 Anglia News and Weather (804397)

Starts: 5.55am Sesame Street (1) (2812939) 7.00 The Big Breakfast (818530) 8.00 The Big Breakfast (8230194) 9.05 Saved by the Bell (1) (8321413) 10.30am CatDog (1) (3900411) 10.45 Boy Meets World (1) (7542225) 11.15 Moshesha (1) (7867218) 11.45 The Big Breakfast (818530) 12.00pm Dawson's Creek (1) (3443568) 1.00pm Planned Plant (1) (8906282) 1.30 FILM: The Student Prince (1) (7840741) 3.30 Collectors' Lot (1) (9555216) 4.00 Fifteen-to-One (1) (8448423) 4.30 Ricki Lake (1) (9500027) 5.00 Planned Plant (1) (8185302) 5.30 Countdown (1) (8955755) 6.00 Newyddion 6 (1) (4991807) 6.10 Heno (1) (3979552) 7.00 Pabot y Cwm (1) (8185484) 7.30 Newyddion (1) (99481736) 8.00 Flermo (1) (41631804) 8.30 Hawilo (1) (8185039) 9.00 ER (1) (2758207) 10.00 Spookhouse (1) (5120352) 10.35 The City (1) (8129175) 10.55 The City (1) (8129175) 11.35 Michael Moore: The Awful Truth (1) (8887842) 12.00am F3 (1) (4289175) 12.45 Football Italia: Mezzanotte (85072507) 3.05 Trans World Sport (24878251) 4.05 Owdded

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5.30 Shortland Street (485)
6.00-6.30 Central News at Six; Weather (378)
11.20-11.30 Central News; Weather (804397)
4.05am Central Nightfinder '99 (8524750)
5.20-5.30 Asian Eye (9767934)

As HTV West except:
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For further listings see Saturday's Vision

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RACING 39

Bradley in race against time to figure in National

SPORT

WEDNESDAY APRIL 7 1999

CRICKET 41

Australia collapse after Langer's defiant century



Juventus earn Ferguson's respect before European Cup semi-final

United prepare to settle score

BY OLIVER HOLT
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

THOMAS HEARNS and the players of Juventus arrived in Manchester yesterday from the different worlds of Detroit and Turin. They had one thing in common. Both found themselves in the unfamiliar position of being consigned to the undercard.

One has come to support a Prince, the others to try to break the hearts of the men who would sacrifice everything else to be kings of Europe. They may be in decline, but that is why they are so dangerous. In their own fields, they are still hit-men, still deadly if underestimated.

As their powers fade, Juventus have made a speciality of striking just when their opponents thought that they had breathed their last. Time and again, they seem to survive against the odds, qualifying by squeezing through the narrowest of mathematical loopholes, edging through with implausibly late equalisers.

They managed to finish top of group B in the league stages of this season's European

Fines threat to players.....40
Ferguson returns.....40
Simon Barnes.....41

Cup, even though they only won one match — and that was their last. In the quarter-finals, they were on the brink of elimination to Olympiakos in Greece when Antonio Conte scored minutes from the end to send them through by the narrowest of margins.

No wonder Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, looked grave and earnest yesterday. He knows Juventus well, respects them above all other European sides for their pedigree, their consistency and for the fact that they are on the verge of appearing in their fourth successive European Cup final.

Behind their tales of vulnerability and the fact that they are adrift in mid-table in Serie A, there lurks something grizzly and hard-bitten at the heart of Juventus, an instinct for knowing how to avoid defeat that cannot be beaten out of them.

Thus, while Ferguson was, quite rightly, optimistic about his team's chances of making a good start by beating them in the first leg of their European Cup semi-final at Old



Ferguson allows himself a rare smile yesterday as he contemplates the size of United's task against Juventus in the European Cup semi-final first leg at Old Trafford tonight

Trafford tonight, his words exuded caution and respect.

There were no jokes about Italian duplicity this time, no mind games about diving and scheming, as there had been in the run-up to the matches against Internazionale last month. This time, it's serious.

This time, too, United are ready: sure that they have no reason to feel overawed against the side that has become their measuring stick. If they beat Juventus, the team that has exposed their

deficiencies so brutally in the past, they will feel that neither Bayern Munich nor Dynamo Kiev will hold any terrors for them in the final.

When they met in this competition two years ago, United played the timid first formers to the Juventus version of Gipper, the school bully. Now, fitter, meaner, stronger and more experienced, United have got the wherewithal to strike back.

It appears that they have a full squad to choose from, that Ryan Giggs will take his place on the left wing and Jaap Stam his in the centre of defence. The only real doubt surrounds the choice of Henning Berg or Ronny Johnsen to partner the Dutchman.

"If we have a good start to the game, if we settle into it well, I think we have a fabulous chance," Ferguson said. "It is never easy in semi-finals. You can make them easy or hard. We hope that the experience we have gathered will help us tomorrow night.

MANCHESTER UNITED (4-4-2)	
P. Schuster	
G. Neville, R. Johnson, J. Stam, D. Irwin	
D. Beckham, R. Keane, P. Scholes, R. Flores	
A. Cole, D. Yorke	
JUVENTUS (4-4-1-1)	
A. Peruzzi	
Z. Mirkovic, P. Montero, M. Juliano, G. Pessotto	
A. Conte, D. Deschamps, E. Davids, A. Di Livio	
Z. Zidane, F. Inzaghi	
Referee: M. Diaz Vega (Spain)	
Kick off: 7.45	
TV: Live coverage, ITV, from 7.30	
RADIO: live coverage from both semi-finals Radio 5 Live	

because we will need that experience against Juventus. The spirit of the team is fantastic. We have proved our quality. We have just to take that final step where we don't want to disappoint in a game like this. We have played them four times now and I think that will help.

"The important thing is to meet the challenge — and we have got a real challenge tomorrow. It is going to be a great game. The priority is to score goals and we won't change our style that way. I don't think Juventus are expecting us to change, either, so we won't be disappointing anyone.

Zidane ready to cross the pain barrier in pursuit of dream

BY STEPHEN WOOD

THERE was no doubting the news, even though the pictures confirming it looked surreal. He was the centre of attention, positioned sheepishly between Ronaldo and Davor Suker, holding a memento of the occasion in his hands.

With a beige sports jacket, a V-neck sweater and his hair combed over a receding hairline, he appeared more like a schoolteacher. In fact, Zinedine Zidane had been named world footballer of the year. It was tempting to check whether his jacket had leather elbow patches to complete the effect, but that would have been too insulting.

His choice of outfit for the Fifa gala was probably hand-picked from one of Armani's finest collections for, although he does not act like one, Zidane is truly a star of the world game. He is also listed as one. Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, acknowledges the midfielder's quality and he will be wary of the contribution that Zidane is likely to make for Juventus at Old Trafford tonight, when the old adversaries meet again, this time in the first leg of their European Cup semi-final.

There had been some doubt over Zidane's presence in Manchester, for the knee injury that he sustained in Juventus'

last European Cup outing, against Olympiakos, threatened to sideline him once more. Zidane, the France international, has not played since that second leg in Greece and, although Carlos Ancelotti, the Juventus coach, was confident about his fitness, Zidane himself was more circumspect.

"I still have pain in the knee when I kick the ball," he said.

"It means I will have to play through gritted teeth and there is no guarantee that I will last the whole match. But to play against United is so important, so I must make the sacrifices."

Zidane, therefore, will start

the match, the fifth time in three seasons that United have met Juventus in the competition. In the previous two years, Juventus have held the upper hand, so much so that they have advanced to the final. There, however, they have been beaten twice in succession, something that still rankles with Zidane.

"It is the biggest regret of my career so far that I have not won a European Cup with Juventus," he said. "Last season [when they lost to Real Madrid in Amsterdam] was worse, because I wondered if I would ever be recognised as a great player on such a stage. It

is lucky for me that the World Cup came along when it did."

Zidane scored two headed goals in the final against Brazil to help to secure the World Cup for France last July. Since then, however, his form for his club has been indifferent, prompting suggestions that his global success had affected his attitude. "It is true that I did not feel quite right after the World Cup, but I know that my head is back together again now," he said.

That is what United are worried about. Zidane has every incentive to perform to his own high standards and so, too, do his team-mates. It is 55 games since their club was knocked out of European competition.

Although their defeat to Empoli, the bottom club in Serie A, last weekend would not suggest it, the Juventus team that walks out at Old Trafford tonight will be a happy collection of players. The internal bickering and disputes that characterised the end of the reign of Marcello Lippi, the former coach, have dispersed.

Ancelotti has reclaimed the faith of the players for the moment and, with rumours abounding that Zidane might leave Turin at the end of the season, Ancelotti means to waste no time in capitalising on their relative serenity.



Zidane's greatest wish is to win the cup with Juventus

FA charges Fowler over his latest prank

BY STEPHEN WOOD

ROBBIE FOWLER was yesterday charged with misconduct by the Football Association for the second time in less than three months. Already facing an FA hearing on Friday concerning his contretemps with Graeme Le Saux, the Chelsea defender, Fowler now has to answer to the authorities over the controversial goal celebration that he indulged in last weekend.

Only now can the implications of his "heat of the moment" prank, when he appeared to mimic the actions of a cocaine user in the FA Carling Premiership match with Everton at Anfield, be sinking in. To fall foul of the FA once may be a mistake, but twice in such a short space of time is foolhardy in the extreme.

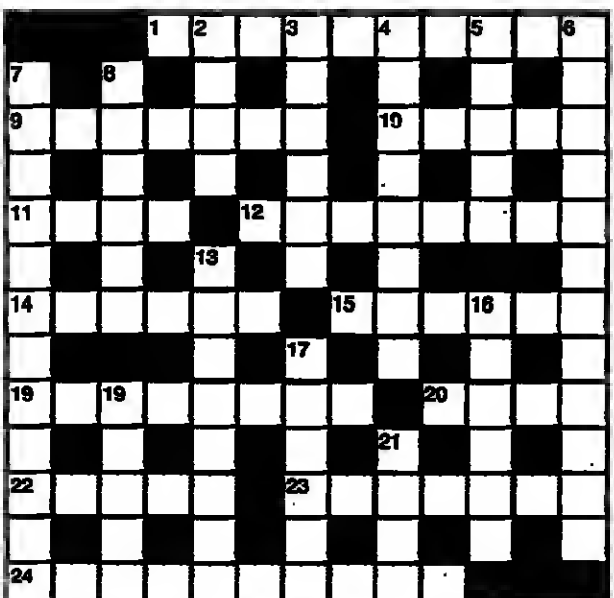
Added to the fact that Fowler's penchant for humour is potentially offensive to certain groups, the FA is unlikely to treat him lightly. Fowler has 14 days to respond to this second charge and, if he requests another personal hearing, then his exit from Lancaster Gate on Friday, after the Le Saux case is closed, may not be so much a "goodbye" as "au revoir".

Liverpool last night said that they had fined Fowler "a very substantial amount" and warned him about his future conduct. The FA could also dock another two weeks' wages from Fowler's pay, which is believed to be around £30,000 a week. Moreover, the powers of punishment in this second case are limitless, such is the unprecedented nature of Fowler's celebrations.

He has been fined £900 by Uefa before, for wearing a T-shirt in support of the sacked Liverpool dockers, but this is more serious. The FA could ban Fowler for five or six league matches. Although the two charges will be treated separately, the FA will take into account the player's previous record if they find him guilty of the second charge. Thus, if he has been punished for the Le Saux affair, the repercussions for his acts last weekend could intensify.

If Fowler is banned, he could miss the end of the season and, possibly, the beginning of the next campaign. Just as he has forced his way back into the England picture, his foolishness could not have come at a worse time.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1685

ACROSS

- 1 Vicious critical attack (7,3)
- 9 Sporting engagement (7)
- 10 Inca knot system (5)
- 11 Norse thunder god (4)
- 12 Apparent solar path (8)
- 14 Bring about: restrict (inheritance) (6)
- 15 Battle site, 1066 (6)
- 16 Scrooges' first name (8)
- 20 Make a to-do (4)
- 22 Of vision (5)
- 23 Endanger (7)
- 24 Drudgery (6-4)

DOWN

- 2 Fit of fever (4)
- 3 Close fist round (6)
- 4 Asked (8)
- 5 Structural beam (5)
- 6 Inflatable children's jump on (6,6)
- 7 Unofficially (3,3,6)
- 8 Urge strongly (6)
- 13 Irritating know-all (8)
- 16 Slat in door (6)
- 17 Notice: a I, possibly (6)
- 19 Taken as food (5)
- 21 Desultory fight: various minerals (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1684

ACROSS: 1 Dust bowl 5 Apse 8 Fragrant 9 Long 11 Curia 12 October 13 Disown 15 Bother 18 Amphora 19 Grail 21 Boom 22 Coquetry 23 Tito 24 Captured
DOWN: 1 Defaced 2 Stair 3 Bismarck 4 Wagon 6 Poo-hah 7 Edgar 10 Strong suit 14 Support 16 Relyed 17 Pagoda 18 Ambient 20 After

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